THE CALIPH'S DESIGN

Architects! Where is your Vortex?

BY

WYNDHAM LEWIS

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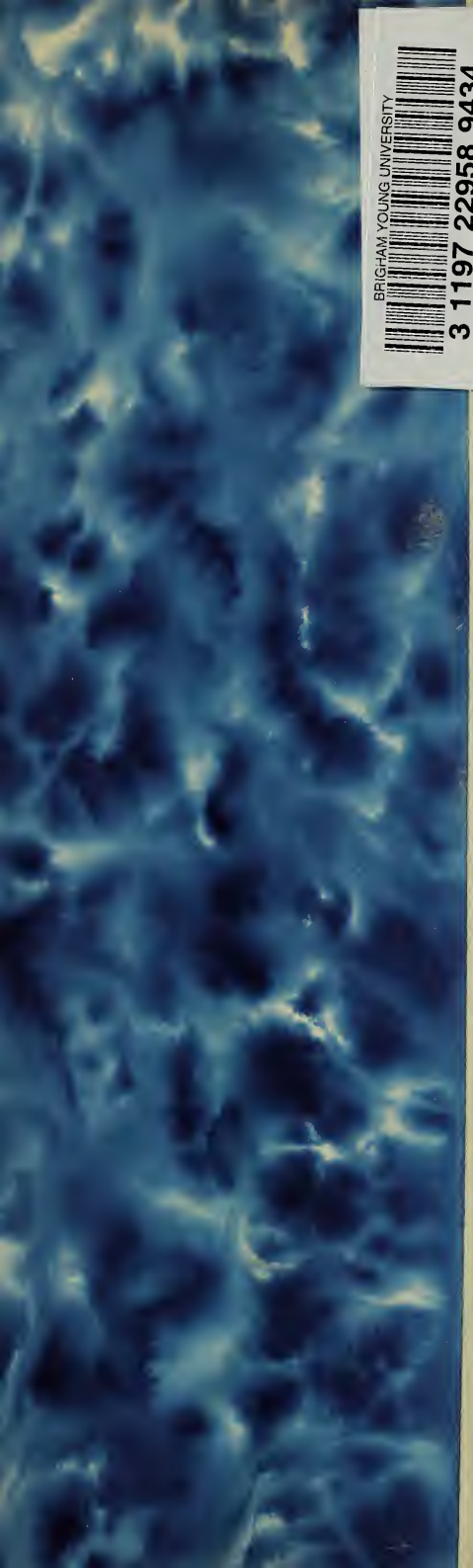

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WYNDHAM LEWIS

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Preface

I HAVE assembled round my parable a series of short articles and notes. They are all related to the idea that this parable embodies. The second half of this pamphlet deals with that section of modern painting that is incompatible with any constructive tendency. I give my reasons for believing that it gains nothing from this incompatibility; and, furthermore, that this incompatibility is a diagnostic of fatigue in the painting in question.

The spirit that pervades a large block—cube, if you like—of the art of painting to-day is an almost purely Art-for-Art's sake dilettantism. Yet you find vigour and conviction: its exponents, Picasso, Matisse, Dérain, Balla, for example, are very considerable artists, very sure of themselves and of the claim of their business. So you get this contradiction of what is really a very great vitality in the visual arts, and at the same time a very serious scepticism and discouragement in the use of that vitality. How far is this the result of the obtuseness and the difficulties set up by the scratch-Public on which painters have to-day to rely? How far is it the result of a combination of the speculative agility of the dealer and of the technical agility among artists that is the flagrant result of the dissemination of second-rate wit?

Then the pleasant amateur (the vindictive failure of more settled and splendid ages) sees his chance. He drops down into the arena from among the audience, flourishing a red pocket-handkerchief, and by his pranks—some pseudo-professional, skipping like any Espada; some an impudent buffoonery—adds to the general confusion. The little bull laughs to see such sport, the crowds of degenerate and dogmatic Toreros, popping with pedantic mirth, tumble in imitation of the new-fangled clowns; the women hurl futurist javelins torn from their hats, and transfix the bottoms of the buffoons and the billycocks of the banderilleros! The little bull, at first amused, eventually, at the end of the Corrida, expires of the most suffocating boredom, injected into him

by a pale urchin with side-whiskers and a hooked nose. Is not that a fairly good picture of the bloody spectacle that we, Public and Performers, present?

It is evident that the Public is at fault. Why does it not insist on a better type of Bull in the first place, a more substantial type of art, that would be capable of driving all but the best performers from the Arena? If the public cannot think of a new type of Bull at the moment, and is not willing to take a new brand of beast that we are rearing on trust, let it at least put into the Circus some fine animal from Nineveh or rake the Nile valley for a compelling and petulant shape.

But the painter or sculptor, too, might give a hand, and the (I hide my face! I am almost too ashamed for him to utter his name) the Architect! Why does not the Architect (and every time I have to use that word I shall feel like apologising to you for mentioning such a poor, forgotten, jaded, lamentable creature!)—why does not this strange absentee, this shadow, this Ghost of the great Trinity, Sculpture, Painting, and Architecture—for which I have substituted Design, from a feeling of comprehensible pudeur, in referring to this unfortunate Entity—*why does he not cheer us up by Building a New Arena?* Constructing around the new Bull that we are breeding our new, very active Art, a brand new and most beautiful Arena?

That question, I know, will remain unanswered. It is a tactless question, I admit. It is not at all nice, even, to refer to Architecture. You should say, perhaps, Usual Offices or something of that sort!

I have thought of a way out for the Architect. It has often been suggested of late that the Architect might become a branch of the Engineering industry. But why should he take all his bric-à-brac shop over to that clean, fresh, erect institution across the road? Rather let the Engineer and the Painter fix up a meeting and talk over the sadly-involved affairs of this decayed concern, which is, of all the scandals in the Art-World, the most scandalous and discreditable. The Painter and the Engineer could buy him out, going into partnership, and produce what would

neither be a world of boxes on the one hand, as it would be if the Engineer controlled house construction (*vide* sky-scrapers), nor of silly antique fakes on the other, as happens when the Architect has his sweet and horrible way. Let us divide up this " ramshackle Empire " of Architecture. And we could even dispense with a Caliph. There need not be any bloodshed. It is a fair and smiling world!

Now, of all painters who have ever breathed ponderously under a copper-coloured Vlaminck sky, the Cubist painters of Paris, the quantities of ponderous painters to be found cubing in that city, are the best fitted to fill this rôle—of superseding, in a practical liaison with the Engineer, the virtually extinct architect.

The energy at present pent up (and rather too congested) in the canvas painted in the studio and sold at the dealer's, and written of with a monotonous emphasis of horror or facetiousness in the Press, must be released and used in the general life of the community. And from thence, from the life outside, it will come back and enrich and invigorate the Studio. When accepted, modern painting is accepted as a revolutionary oasis in the settled, dreary expanse of twentieth century commercial art: a place where bright colours, exciting and funny forms, a little knot of extravagant people, are to be found; and that it is amusing sometimes to visit. It was the same with the Impressionists: Whistler found himself beleaguered and interfered with in the same way: Gauguin and Van Gogh had the same experience. Listlessness, dilettantism is the mark of studio art. *You must get Painting, Sculpture, and Design out of the studio and into life somehow or other* if you are not going to see this new vitality desiccated in a Pocket of inorganic experimentation. And on the other hand, you must put the Architect, as he drags out his miserable if well-paid life to-day, into the dustbin, *and close the lid.*

When in the course of this pamphlet I speak of the " Movement in painting," or " Modern Painting," I mean all that is included by the practice of such diverse painters as, for instance, Dérain, Matisse, Picasso, Kandinsky, or Survage. These painters represent one æsthetic current in

the sense that they are none of them Impressionists, have all one synthetic intention or another, and are all related roughly in time and in enterprise. The complete non-representative character of Kandinsky's painting, or the weightiness and palpable logic of the Cézanne-evolved Cubist, is really a portion of the same effort as that made by Dérain or Matisse, who are neither Cubist nor Abstract. Survage's mixed phantasy is the same.

There are bound to be within this great general movement many experiments and enterprises attempting to attract all the bulk of it in one direction or another. One of the most powerful of these and one that has held the stage for the last few years, is the Nature-morte development of a group of Cubist painters, Picasso, Braque, and Gris being three of the best known among them. Entertaining as some of these things are, I can see nothing of permanent interest deriving from them. Meantime, this exercise pursued for so long by these painters appears to me to denote a bad weak spot in the quarters where it saw the light. Again, Picasso, great artist as he is, and much as I admire him, looks to me rather equivocal and unsatisfactory in the light of present events. I devote considerable space to an adverse analysis of this aspect of the general movement. But it is because I believe so much in the wider movement, and because the spirit of this Nature-mortism—also the David-Raphael eclectic classic wave—contradicts what I have written this pamphlet to propose, that I deal with it so thoroughly. One other point in this preamble. I have no fault to find with Cézannism. Any faithful discipleship of that master is sure to be sound art. All the same, Cézanne is such a lonely figure, and he has such a weight of pups around him! No one man, even a Cézanne, should have on his shoulders such a huge effort of initiation as his was. There should have been several men. Ungrateful as it seems, one must say that it is a misfortune that all the diversity of art and human talent of a generation should have depended on this one old man, as has been the case, since he was unearthed.

PART I

The Caliph's Design

Section 1. *The Parable of the Caliph's Design.*
,, 2. *The Bull Sounds.*
,, 3. *The Politician's Apathy.*
,, 4. *How the Fact of Style Obstructs.*
,, 5. *Where the Painter would Benefit.*
,, 6. *The Public Chosen.*
,, 7. *Architecture.*
,, 8. *Child Art and the Naif.*
,, 9. *Machinery and Lions.*
,, 10. *The Artist's Luck.*

The Parable of the Caliph's Design

ONE day the Caliph rose gingerly and stealthily from his bed of gold and placed himself at a window of his palace. He then took a pen of turquoise, and for some hours traced hieroglyphs on a piece of paper. They consisted of patches and lines, and it was impossible to say what he was doing. Apparently exhausted by the effort, he sank back on his bed of gold and slept heavily for ten hours. Waking up in the small hours of the morning, he called for a messenger and despatched him in search of Mahmud and Hasan, respectively the most ingenious engineer and the most experienced architect in his dominions. He was in fine fettle when they arrived. He pointed with a certain facetiousness to his design lying outspread on a table. He then addressed them as follows :—" I am extremely dissatisfied with the shape of my city, so I have done a design of a new city, or rather of a typical street in a new city. It is a little vorticist effort that I threw off while I was dressing this morning." He negligently curled the tip of his beard. " I want you to look at it and tell me what you think of my skill."

Mahmud and Hasan bent over the design, and, noticing that their lord's eye was dancing, they indulged in a few hurried guffaws, scraping their feet and pushing each other.

The Caliph then said, " Oh, Mahmud and Hasan, that is a very funny design. But it is my will that such a street should rise beneath the windows of my palace, work starting on it at ten o'clock to-morrow morning. It is your unpleasant duty to invent the shapes and conditions that would make it possible to realise my design. You have till ten to-morrow morning in which to produce the requisite plans and instructions for such a work. Should you fail to do so your heads will fall as soon as I have been informed of your failure, that is to say, between ten and eleven to-morrow. Good-night, oh Mahmud and Hasan."

Those two tremendously able men burst into a cold sweat. Their eyes protruded from their intelligent faces. They clicked their tongues, shrugged their shoulders, and shuffled out with gestures of despair. After a half-hour of complete paralysis of their brilliant faculties, they pulled themselves together, and by ten o'clock next morning a series of the most beautiful plans that had yet been made in Baghdad (retaining with an exact fidelity the masses and directions of the potentate's design) were ready for their master. And within a month a strange street transfigured the heart of that cultivated city.

The Bull Sounds

WE are all agreed as to the deplorable nature of the form-content and colour-content around us. But there agreement ceases.

The divergence of opinion gathers round the following points: Is it not preferable to have every manifestation of the vulgar and stupid constantly, in an appetising, delicious form (something like the "highness" of game), at the disposal of our superiority and wit?

What would Flaubert have done had France not bred Bouvards and Péchuchets with rabbit-like fecundity? Can nature ever be thanked enough for Sir Sampson Legend, Mantalini, Boswell's Johnson, Falstaff or any such types of Comedy, composed of the nastiest excrement and washiest imbecilities? No one would diminish by one ounce the meat of art that resides in folly or deformity; or see snobbery, gluttony or cruelty reduced by one single exemplaire, once his mind was fixed on the benefits that the æsthetic sense has received from their abundance in Nature!

A less self-indulgent satirist like Aristophanes, it is true, will attach a stink or some disgusting attribute to his absurd character, relying on the squeamishness of his audience, sending his characters about like skunks. But most authors are not so moral as to poison our pleasure with these gases. A stupid form is for the painter the same food as a stupid man for a writer like Gogol or Flaubert.

So it is very debatable whether without the stimulation of stupidity, or every bestial, ill-made, tasteless object that abounds in life to-day, the artist would be as well off and well nourished. Would he not be in the position of a satirist, like Flaubert, without a Bouvard, or of an artist like Boswell without his rich and very unusual dish? The irritation with the particular French folly that surrounded him, and that Flaubert ate every day as regularly as his breakfast; the consequent pessimism that became the favourite manure for his thoughts; we cannot see Flaubert without that, any more than we can conceive of Rousseau the Douanier without his squab little bourgeois, and blank, paunchy little villas.

The point rather lies in the *attitude* that was Flaubert's and that was the Douanier's. Flaubert hated Bouvard, and considered the vulgarity and idiocy that he witnessed a very sad and improper affair. The Douanier, on the other hand, probably admired his Bouvards very much. It was with a naively respectful eye, it may be assumed, that he surveyed the bourgeois on Sunday, and noted his peculiarities like a child, directly, without judging.

Shakespeare, it is true, must have relished the absurd or deformed more consciously; and Dickens made a cult of it. But with Shakespeare it was against a vast background of other

matter, and as comic relief, or used in farces, and so labelled. It has never amounted to what has practically become, in our day, a *rejection* of anything as dull or useless unless it lends itself to our appetite for the comic or the "queer."

But Wilde's antithetic glitter, when used in journalism, may become the most wearisome thing on earth. We long, confronted by such a monotony of inversion as we get in Mr. G. K. Chesterton, for instance, for a plain "dull" statement. In the same way, if the villainous stupidity that has always been around every man since the world began (only he has belaboured it with one hand while caressing it with the other) became something like the religion of the educated—such education, that is, as enabled you to enjoy it—and its pursuit and enjoyment the one topic and habit of life, should we not sigh for the old variety; the hero, the villain, the lovely lady and the Comic Relief? Should we not also, if embedded in some bric-à-brac of stuffed birds and wax flowers, and the languors of the "æsthetic period" of the article I cite later in this pamphlet, look towards Karnak, a plain French provincial town, or almost anywhere—with eyes of longing?

Surely all this sensibility of the "queer," the "amusing," the divinely ugly, the exquisitely vulgar, will date, and date very quickly.

There would to-day, in the "modern" section of the art-world, be as great an outcry if some philistine proposed that the lovely embellishments of our streets, coloured signs, posters, beautiful police-stations and bewitching tiled Tube stations should be pulled down, as there would have been formerly, and is still by the "beauty-loving public," when some "picturesque old bit" or decaying cottage is removed.

But, with men trying their hardest to eliminate ugliness, injustice, imbecility and so forth from the world, has there ever been any absence of these commodities for the sweet, or bitter, tooth of the artist? Is there ever likely to be? It is true that the artist can gorge himself to-day probably as never before. But is that the best thing for his talent?

If twenty Christs charged abreast anywhere in the world, you would still get in a remarkably short time, and within a half-hour's walk of their super-calvary, some such monument as the First Pyramid, the result of such a block of egotism as had never been seen before, to show you the weakness of the humane corrective. But I do not believe you would ever get a pyramid builder without Christian hysteria.

Even in order to appreciate the "banal" you must not have too much of it. And you must *pretend* you do not like it even if you are incapable of liking anything else. The reactionary Prussian theorists of war—good, beneficent war—tyranny, and so forth were less useful than the Pacifist, and less intelligent.

The arrangement seems to be that you spend half your time destroying the cheap, the foolish, the repellent; and the other half enjoying what is left over after your efforts ! This evidently being how we are intended to live, there is no excuse for slackness in the carrying out of your unpleasant duty : that is to desire equity, mansuetude, in human relations, fight against violence, and work for formal beauty, significance and so forth, in the arrangement and aspect of life.

But to conclude. The great line, the creative line; the fine, exultant mass; the gaiety that snaps and clacks like a fine gut string; the sweep of great tragedy; the immense, the simple satisfaction of the surest, the completest art, you could not get if you succeeded in eliminating passion; nor if you crowned imbecility, or made an idol of the weak.

Whereas you can always get enough silliness, meaningless form, vulgar flavour to satisfy the most gargantuan or the most exquisite appetite.

The Politician's Apathy

WHAT is this ugliness, banality, and squalor to which we have been referring? It is simply what meets your eye as it travels up practically any street in London to-day, or wanders around any Hotel lounge or Restaurant, or delects itself along the wall of the official galleries at Burlington House. Next, what influences go to the making of this horrible form-content and colour-content that we can either offer up a prayer of thankfulness for, take no notice of, or occupy ourselves with modifying, in our spare time? Exactly what set of circumstances, what lassitude or energy of mind working through millions of channels and multitudes of people, make the designs on match boxes (or the jokes on the back of some), the ornamental metal-work on the lamp-posts, gates, knife-handles, sepulchral enclosures, serviette-rings, most posters, ornamented Menu cards, the scenery in our Musical spectacles, chapter-headings and tail-pieces, brooches, bangles, embossments on watches, clocks, carving-knives, cruets, pendants in Asprey's, in Dobson's, in Hancock's windows in Bond Street; in fact, every stitch and scrap of art-work that indefatigably spreads its blight all over a modern city, invading every nook, befouling the loveliest necks, waists, ears, and bosoms; defiling even the doormat—climbing up, even, and making absurd and vapid the chimney pot, which you would have thought was inaccessible and out of sight enough for Art not to reach; for the cheap modern thousand-headed devil of design not to find it worth while to spoil?

We are all perfectly agreed, are we not, that practically any house, railing, monument, wall, structure, thoroughfare, or lamp-post in this city should be instantly pulled down, were it not for the " amusement " and stimulus that the painter gets out of it?

A complete reform (were it not for the needs of the painter who *must* have his bit of banality, bless his little heart !) of every notion or lack of notion on the significance of the appearance of the world should be instituted. A gusto, a consciousness should imbue the placing and the shaping of every brick. A central spectacle, as a street like Regent Street is, should be worked out in the smallest detail. It should not grow like a weed, without forethought, meaning, or any agency but the drifting and accident of commerce. A great thoroughfare like Regent Street develops and sluggishly gets on its ill-articulated legs, and blankly looks at us with its silly face. There are Bouvards and Pécuchets in brick and stone, or just dull cheerless photographs. There is no beautiful or significant relief, even, in this third-rate comic spectacle.

Do politicians understand so little the influence of the Scene of Life, or the effect of Nature, that they can be so indifferent to the capital of a wealthy and powerful community? Would not

a more imaginative Cecil Rhodes have seen that the only way an Empire such as he imagined could impress itself on the consciousness of a people would be in some such way as all ambitious nations have taken to make the individual citizen aware of his privileges and his burden? Whether in the weight of a Rhetoric of buildings, or in the subtler ways of beauty signifying the delights and rewards of success won by toil and adventure; in a thousand ways the imagination of the multitude could be captured and fixed. But beyond the obvious policy of *not* having a mean and indolent surrounding for the capital of what sets out to be an "Empire," simply for human life at all, or what sets out to be human life—*to increase gusto and belief in that life*—it is of the first importance that the senses should be directed into such channels, appealed to in such ways, that this state of mind of relish, fullness and exultation should obtain.

It is life at which you must aim. Life, full life, is lived through the fancy, the senses, consciousness. These things must be stimulated and not depressed. The streets of a modern city are depressing. They are so aimless and so weak in their lines and their masses, that the mind and senses jog on their way like passengers in a train with blinds down in an overcrowded carriage.

This is worse, again, for the crowd than the luckier individual. The life of the crowd, of the common or garden man, is exterior. He can only live through others, outside himself. He, in a sense, *is* the houses, the railings, the bunting or absence of bunting. His beauty and justification is in a superficial exterior life. His health is there. He dwindles and grows restless, sick and troublesome when not given these opportunities to live and enjoy in the simple, communal crowd manner. He has just sense enough to know that he is living or not living. Give him a fine, well-fed type of life, a bit dashing and swanky, suitably clothed, with a glamour of adventure about it, to look at, and he is gladdened, if his own stomach is not too empty. Give him fine processions, and holidays, military display. Yes, but there is something you are going to omit. By the deepest paradox he knows that the plaster objects stuck up in Oxford Street outside Selfridges for Peace Day are not a symbol of anything but commerce; in which he equally, though not so successfully, is engaged himself. There is nothing there that he could not do himself, and they do not reach his imagination. Similarly, it is not such a tremendous critical flight as you would imagine for him to connect in some subtle way in his mind these banal plaster statues with the more careful but even more effusively mean Albert Memorial, or any other monument that meets his eye. Yet these he knows are the monuments that typify the society of which he is a unit. This putrid dullness, hopeless deadly stare of almost imbecile stupidity, that he is confronted with in the art offerings from those

above, as in their persons, can hardly be expected to stimulate him, either to buoyancy, obedience, or anything but boredom.

So if there are a hundred reasons why Painters should oppose any modification of the appearance of our works, which is *Perfect* in the quaintness of its stupidity, there is no reason why the politician should feel obliged to protect it.

How the Fact of Style Obstructs

THE parable of the Caliph's design describes the state of mind which must be that of every healthy and active artist living in the midst of the blasphemous stupidity, too much so even for health, that surrounds us to-day. But alas ! although like the Caliph, a vorticist, I have not the power of life and death over the Mahmuds and Hasans of this city. Otherwise I should have no compunction in having every London architect's head severed from his body at ten o'clock to-morrow morning, unless he made some effort to apply a finer standard of art in his own art-practise. I would flood those indolent commercial offices, where architects pursue their trade, with abstract designs. I am sure the result would be to cram the world with form and intention, where to-day, as far as it is beholden to the architect, it has no discernible significance or æsthetic purpose of any sort.

There is no reason at all why there should not be a certain number of interesting architects. I can also see no reason why this pamphlet should not bring them forth. I should be very proud of that, and watch their labours with great interest. This, I think, is such a modest optimism that I am sure you will allow it. I should like to see the entire city rebuilt on a more conscious pattern. But this would automatically happen should an architect of genius turn up who would invent an architecture for our time and climate that was also a creative and fertilising art-form. The first great modern building that arose in this city would soon carry everything before it; and hand in hand with the engineer, and his new problems, by force of circumstances so exactly modern ones, would make a new form-content for our everyday vision. So all we want is one single architect with brains, and we will regard him with optimism.

Now the question of form-content is obviously one of importance to every painter. Almost any painter, sculptor, or designer of an actual type to-day will agree with you that Cheapside, Piccadilly, Russell Square, Marylebone Road, are thoroughly dull and insignificant masses of brickwork, laid out according to no coherent plan, bestially vulgar in their details of ornament, and in every way fit for instant demolishment. Similarly, he will agree that any large and expensive West-End restaurant is an eyesore, and a meaningless sham.

Similarly, when you say to him that it is about time something were done to get rid of this graceless and stupid spectacle, he will agree, but will quickly change the subject. Every law of common-sense precludes any possibility of an appreciable modification of this detestable sight. He will either imagine that you are out for some Utopia, or he will think that your notions hardly agree with the fashionable fad-idea that all is for the best in the best of all possible worlds—that whatever reality, accident, or

your neighbour, that is, flings at your head, your head should resound to, if it is empty, as it ought to be.

Of course there are good arguments against you. I have made use of those arguments myself. We have just been envisaging them in the section of this pamphlet headed "The Bull Sounds." But we will proceed to sift out more thoroughly the Painter's argument; this time not only the painter or the amateur, but any painter.

Style, he will say, can transform anything into gold. Take a convenient example. Should Rembrandt in one of his pen-drawings have had a more interesting type of architecture before him for subject matter, in place of the country mills by the side of the Dutch canals, would this better form-content have made his drawings better drawings? You must answer to that: "No, it would not." But a windmill is a rough and simple contrivance, and there is a sad difference between the rough beauty and fitness of such objects stuck up centuries ago in Holland, and similar rough and simple objects built to-day. One would do better to imagine a Rembrandt, working in the same way that he worked, doing similar drawings in an industrial country like England or Germany at the present time. Still you have to admit that as fine an artist as Rembrandt would, by the magic of his use of the medium he chose, by his line, by his tact of simplification and elimination, make a *New* thing of anything, however poor the original. And so, in considering if it is worth while to change a single brick, even, or the most trifling ornament, however offensive, you would be compelled to admit that, as regards the production of the finest type of art you would be no better off. The best half-dozen artists of any country, as regards the actual beauty and significance of their work, do not depend on the objective world for their success or stimulus.

As to all the thousands of artists, not amongst the most able or imaginative, but possibly able to do something, it is another story. *They* depend on Nature, on the objective world, for their stimulus or their taste. Set a rather poor artist down in a roadway, ask him to draw a street of houses in front of him. If the houses were of a good and significant build, he would be more likely to do a good and significant painting than if they were such clumsy, and stupid, lineless, massless, things as we invariably find ourselves in the midst of to-day. If he has no particular invention or vision of his own, he depends on Nature a good deal. Nature must do half the work.

But the fallacy in the contention about a good artist is this. That although he does not depend on Nature, he certainly depends on life, and is subject to its conditions. And this surely re-acts on his painting. If he starves, is disturbed in his work, or has to do some horrible type of present-day commercial painting or designing to make a living, then his independence of objective form and colour-content is of little use to him.

Where the Painter would Benefit

APART from my conviction on this subject, a useful way of illuminating it will be to consider how I, or an artist like me, stands towards it on the practical ground. It reduces itself to this : I have nothing materially to gain by your adopting these theories. You are perplexed : painters are everywhere perplexed. I make you and them a present of this analysis of these perplexities. I see the shapes that you would see did the world for the moment contain more stimulation and effort in the related arts. I do not need to have a house built with significant forms, lines, masses, and details of ornament, and planted squarely before my eyes, to know that such significance exists, or to have my belief in its reality stimulated. But *you* require that. I am, or any painter you can see is, obviously here to do that. I am at your disposal in this respect. But that is primarily a work for you and not for me. I can get on quite well, the artist always can, without this material realisation. Theoretically, even, a creative painter or designer should be able to exist quite satisfactorily without paper, stone or paints, or without lifting a finger to translate into forms and colours his specialised creative impulse. It should be the same with the painter, the architect, or the sculptor as it is with the composer of music. The Interpreter is really only in the same category as the bricklayer, or at best a foreman of works.

Still, I suffer somewhat all the same, from this lack of readiness, or really of aptitude, on your part, to employ me usefully. And every true artist I know, painter or sculptor, is in the same box. The trouble is this : It does not matter what objective Nature supplies. The inventive artist is his own purveyor. But the society of which he forms a part, can, by its backwardness, indolence, or obtuseness, cause him a series of inconveniences; and above all, can, at certain times and under certain conditions, affect his pocket adversely and cause him to waste an absurd amount of time. When no longer able to produce his best work, it would not be a waste of time for a painter or for a writer to lecture, for example, on the subject of his craft. The propaganda, explanatory pamphlets, and the rest, in which we, in this country, have to indulge, is so much time out of active life which would normally be spent as every artist wishes to spend his time, in work, in a state of complete oblivion as regards any possible public that his work may ever have. Yet were one's ideas on painting not formulated, and given out in the shape of a lecture, a pamphlet, or a critical essay, an impossible condition would result for an artist desirous of experimenting.

So when I say that I should like to see a completely transfigured world, it is not because I want to *look* at it. It is *you* who would look at it. It would be your spirit that would benefit by

this exhilarating spectacle. *I* should merely benefit, I and other painters like me, by no longer finding ourselves in the position of freaks, the queer wild men of cubes, the terrible futurists, or any other rubbish that the Yellow Press invents to amuse the nerves of its readers. (Do you suppose that the art-man who reports on the French Show in Tottenham Court Road and describes the "horror" of these pictures, really *thinks* that they are in any way blood-curdling? No. He knows for every extra curdle he makes an extra quid.) It naturally does not please me, or any other painter who paints pictures that appear extravagant according to the pretty and facetious standard of this time, to be described as a wild man, or a bolshevik in paint. No pleasurable thrill accompanies these words when used about one's own very normal proceedings, since they appear to the painter the *only* normal proceedings in the midst of the detestable capers of the usual mild lunatic asylum we have to inhabit.

The Public Chosen

THE Public I should like for this pamphlet is a rather different one than that to which painters usually consider it worth while to address themselves. In the first place, any individual belonging to the rank and file of the Royal Academy is fond of regarding himself as " a Craftsman "; as a specialist of the most prodigious, horny, paint-and-dust-grimed, mediæval sort. The more furibundly ignoble his paintings, the further he retires into the technical mysteries of his craft. And so lay opinion he scorns.

Then another pale exists, an even funnier one, beyond which stand those multitudes who have not been taught a delightful faintness, a cheap catch of the voice, and the few dozen snobbish tricks of thought and hand coined in each decade for the lucky young rich. A board school master, an excise clerk, a douanier, for that matter, are usually approached if at all with every nuance of amused condescension that a disgusting stereotyped education can breed.

How sick such men must be with the wearisome and endless trifling that they have come to associate with the word Artist!

I write in these notes for a socially wider and not necessarily specialist public.

Architecture

ARCHITECTURE is the weakest of the arts, in so far as it is the most dependent on the collective sensibility of its period. It is so involved, on the other hand, in utility, and so much a portion of public life, that it is far more helpless than painting and literature in the face of public indifference. Sculpture shares with it some of this helplessness. There are many good sculptors wasted to-day as thoroughly as anyone can be, through the absence of such conditions as are needed to give them their chance of natural expression. Had Gaudier Brzeska lived, he would be doing an odd door-knocker or two, and an occasional paper-weight, or portrait busts, for a living, with all the limiting circumstance that personal vanity sets to that form of art work. There only remains for the sculptor, as for the painter, the art exhibition, and the freak-selling or commercial-selling of the dealer's shop. A man like Archipenko, for instance, quite capable of finer things, is reduced to stunt-sculpting of a dilettante sort, on a small scale, it may be assumed of a precarious nature on the material side.

Have you ever met an Architect? I do not mean a well-paid *pasticheur,* who restores a house or runs one up, in Tudor, Italian, or any other style. But a creative architect, or a man with some new power in his craft, and concerned with the æsthetic as well as the practical needs of the mass sensibility of his time? I have not. And what is more, should you wish to approach this neglected subject and learn more about it, you will find nothing but a dismal series of very stupid books for your information and reference. The best treatise I have so far come across is W. K. Lethaby's handbook, "An Introduction to the History and Theory of the Art of Building." It appears to me to be as sound a book as possible: and if everybody were of Mr. Lethaby's opinions we should soon find that the aspect of this lifeless scene had changed for the better. And this voice for the right and active vision comes from the unlikeliest quarter. For Mr. Lethaby, I understand, is Chief Lecturer on Architecture in the South Kensington School.

Listen to this admitted academic authority on the subject:

> "Modern armoured concrete is only a higher power of the Roman system of construction. If we could sweep away our fear that it is an inartistic material, and boldly build a railway station, a museum, or a cathedral, wide and simple, amply lighted, and call in our painters to finish the walls, we might be interested in building again almost at once. This building interest must be aroused.
>
> "We cannot forget our historical knowledge, nor would we if we might. The important question is, Can it be organised and directed, or must we continue to be betrayed by it? The

only agreement that seems possible is agreement on a scientific basis, on an endeavour after perfect structural efficiency. If we could agree on this we need not trouble about beauty, for that would take care of itself.

" Experience must be brought back once more as the centre of architecture, and architects must be trained as engineers are trained.

" The modern way of building must be flexible and vigorous, even smart and hard. We must give up designing the broken-down picturesque which is part of the ideal of make-believe. The enemy is not science, but vulgarity, a pretence to beauty at second hand."

What do you make of that? Does not Mr. Lethaby, Professor of Architecture in the South Kensington Schools, speak to you in a tone seldom heard in the art-schools? What English professor of painting would you find recommending his pupil to paint in a manner " smart and hard "?

Such books as C. H. Caffin's contain nothing very useful. He refers to the Woolworth Buildings in New York in the following way :

" Up to the present, the noblest example of this new movement is the Woolworth Buildings, which is not only the tallest of the tall buildings, but a monument of arresting and persuasive dignity. Such a building supplies an uplift to the spirit." Etc.

The Woolworth Buildings, one of the tallest in New York, consisting of 51 storeys, is a piece of rudimentary ecclesiastical nonsense, 25 of its storeys being a spire. It is in every way less interesting than the less ambitious skyscrapers, which are at least enormously tall boxes, and by their scale " uplift the spirit " that wishes to soar so high, far more than this monstrous, dull, Anglican church : that is not a church, however, and has not even that excuse for its stupid spire.

In this connection, we hear a great deal of rubbish talked about the sky-scraper. The sky-scraper, for the most part, is a tall box. So far it has been nothing but that; except where, as in the Schiller Theatre Building in Chicago, or the famous Woolworth Buildings, some dreadful intervention of art has converted it into an acre-high advertisement of the modern architect's fatuity.

It has been a fashion lately to admire the sky-scraper in its purely engineering form, and other forms of quite plain engineering construction. But a box is always a box, however high. And when you think of the things that could have been done by a liaison of the artist's fancy, once more, with all these works of engineering genius, you wonder that there is not one single example which one can quote of such a structure.

In the case of a dynamic shape like an aeroplane there is neither

any reason nor any need for the association of engineering inventiveness with that of the artist. All such machines, except for the colouring of them and a possible deliberate camouflaging to modify their shape, not to deceive the eye of the enemy but to add significance or beauty to their aspect, develop in accordance with a law of efficient evolution as absolute as a tiger, a wasp, or a swallow. They are definitely, for the artist, in the category of animals.

When we come to the static cell-structures in which we pass our lives there is far more latitude and opportunity for the inventiveness of the artist.

To begin with, let us by all means reduce everything to the box. Let us banish absolutely the stylistic architectural rubbish. But even as to the shaping of the box or series of boxes let the artist be used.

For if you say that the design and ornament over the body of the building is the same as the clothes on a man's back, there is still something to be said about the naked shape of the man or even for his skeleton. The nature of the body or of the skeleton will decide what the character of the clothes must be. So the artist should come in long before he usually does, or give a new consciousness to the shaping of the skeleton of the Engineer. This should be invariable, not occasional : that is when the first painters or sculptors have been used for this purpose, instead of the horrible stock architect.

Remy de Gourmont has the following notion on the subject of the decay of architecture in our time :

> " Voilà le point capital de l'explication pourquoi on avait au moyen-age le sens de l'architecture : on ignorait la nature. Incapables de jouir de la terre telle qu'elle est, des fleuves, des montagnes, de la mer, des arbres, ils étaient obligés, pour exciter leur sensibilité, de se créer un monde factice, d'ériger des forêts de pierre.
>
> " La nature s'ouvrit à l'homme parce que la France et le centre de l'Europe furent sillonnés de routes, parce que les campagnes devinrent sûres et d'un commode accès."

And he goes on to fancy that perhaps when Nature has become too cheap, through its general accessibility, and men tire of it, that Art and Architecture will once more have its turn.

Since a narrow belt of land like the Nile valley is more crowded with buildings, or their remains, than any other territory, and since the character of those buildings, the source of all subsequent constructions, was evidently determined by the nature of the landscape of Egypt, the hills, palms, and so forth, with which, further, the builders were at least as familiar as any men could be with Nature, de Gourmont's theory would appear to be nonsense. It displays the listless and dull eye that a usually keen journalist can turn to this Cinderella of a subject.

Child Art and the Naif

THE Child and the Naif are two of the principal mainstays of dilettante criticism in this country. And this "phenomenon" with all the sentimentality of which its exploitation clearly is susceptible, is one of the trump cards in the Amateur's game, and a fruitful source of confusion. It is one of the most obvious avenues, flooded with an effusive critical craft, by which the thoroughly undeserving can slip through into a position of artificial respect.

"The Young Visiters" is swelling into fabulous editions. Pamela Bianca, a child of nine, is fawned on by the hoary great. The Omega Workshops have had an exhibition of children's drawings. The Naif, too, is a doll-like dummy that the trader on sentiment pushes in front of him in stalking the public. The Naif is an elastic phenomenon and of earlier date, as regards his boom, than the Child.

The Slade School produces regularly a certain number of naifs. They are frequently the most sophisticated individuals imaginable. Beyond the fact that they wrestle with a slight incompetence, in addition to possessing a pretty feeling for the sentimentalities of rustic prints, although they never by any means capture the native charm of those, they are no more naive than Mr. Horatio Bottomley. None that I know are half as good manufactured naiveté as George Formby. They are very cunningly simple, and their graces and queernesses pall as swiftly as the tiresome mannerisms of a too clever child, exploiting its childishness.

There are two types of Naif: the Child-Naif, and the Primitive Naif. It is difficult to decide which is the more boring of the two.

The Child-Naif usually starts from a happy combination of an ingrained technical incompetence and of a "nice feeling" for the things of art. He is distressed that this "nice feeling" should be wasted owing to his lack of power, and hits on the happy idea, or gradually drifts into the habit (a sort of progressive *collage*) of bringing his lack of painter's prowess and his nice feeling for art together, and producing the very marketable commodity, Naiveté!

Or he may be a bit more definitely naive than this. The woodenness of his figures or trees, his rickety line, may really have a pathetic charm for him. He genuinely pities his little wooden figures for being so wooden and silly looking (a manner of pitying himself). He is sorry for himself through them! And this sensation becomes a necessity with him; he goes on doing them. If he has been touched enough; or, more likely, if his is a nasty theatrical self-love, other people are touched, and he in turn touches a little regular income in consequence!

Or the more general pathos may be absent. The weak pathetic line, and silly meaningless forms, the unreal colour, are the object

of a certain emotion : something that I can only describe as a technical pity; a professional pathos. The best is made of an unfortunate limitation. This Naif may even become perfectly bumptious and self-satisfied in course of time, everything turning out, in the practical sphere, for the best : by the same process that produces the infantile swank of the deformed.

The Primitive Naif may evolve rather in the same way as the Child-Naif, or he may not. It may be a refuge of incompetence. Or it may be a romantic mode, teutonic in character. Then the Child-Naif and the Primitive Naif sometimes come together in the same artist.

There is no such thing as the *born Primitive.* There is the *Primitive* in point of view of historical date, the product of a period. And there is the *Primitive voulu,* who is simply a pasticheur and stylist, and invariably a sentimentalist, when not a rogue. When he is not specially an *Italian* or *Flemish Primitive,* but just a *Primitive* (whatever period he flits into *always* a Primitive), he is on the same errand and has the same physiognomy as the Period-taster, or any other form of dilettante or of pasticheur. The Primitive voulu acrobatically adapts himself to a mentality of a different stage of social development : the pasticheur merely, en touriste, visits different times and places, without necessarily so much a readjustment of his mind as of his hand.

As to the Child proper. Of course the success of " The Young Visiters " is partly due to its domestic appeal, partly due to its character of a sentimental curiosity. The distillation of Middle-class snobbery, also, presented in this pure and objectionable form, is sure to " attract a wide public."

Pamela Bianca, whose drawings are to be found in a publication called the *Owl,* in *Vogue,* and so forth, is like Daisy Ashford at least in one point : that *she is not a child.* She may be nine years old, and " The Young Visiters " may have been written by a child of two. But they both have every sad relaxed quality of the average adult mind. They are as extinct as that. Pamela Bianca's " libido " has naively devoured the Douanier's Fête National. But that is the nearest she has come to naiveté. Otherwise she imitates Beardsley or Botticelli, or some fellow-child, with as sophisticated a competence as any South Kensington student. She is very exactly the æsthetic peer of the professional painters who run the *Owl.*

The growth of the mind and of the body is so often not parallel, some people's " mature " lives so long, others almost non-existent, that it is difficult to know where you are dealing with the art product of the child, or the child-like art of the adult.

Presumably a powerful nature develops at once, disregarding the schedules of human growth and the laws of probation. William Blake was a case of a being who took little notice of the dawdling

ritual of growth. On the other hand, many individuals, highly developed in adult life, have shown no precocity at all.

Genius no doubt has its system of working in a man, all the facts of the case—the best time to strike—the mental resources—the character of the gift to be hatched—in its possession.

As regards the Naif, Rousseau the Douanier is the only great naif as far as I know. In his case Nature made on the one hand his Douanier's calling a water-tight case against sophistication; and then put something divinely graceful and simple—that we associate with "childhood" and that that abstraction sometimes has—at his disposal for the term of his life.

Nothing seemingly could corrupt or diminish it; and it brought with it, like a very practical fairy, or a sardine tin with its little key, an instrument with which to extract all the genius from within this Douanier of forty or fifty years old.

To return to the Child proper. The only case in which the drawing of a child is of value, is when it possesses the same outstripping or unusual quality that the work of a very few adult artists possesses. The adult in question may have accomplished nothing himself as a child. But the drawing of the child would seem perhaps to be his work at a more immature stage. It is not a question of Child or Adult. It is a question simply of the *better being*. Both belong to an exceptional type of being.

There is also a fresh and delicate charm of very young life that some children, not many, have the power of infusing into their drawings. And there remains the melancholy fact that no infant's pictures could be duller than the average adult's. And therefore there is every bit as much justification for exhibiting any twenty children's scribbles as there is for exhibiting those of any twenty professional painting adults.

Machinery and Lions

THE Futurists had in their idée fixe a great pull over the sentimental and sluggish eclecticism, deadness and preciosity of the artists working in Paris.

But they accept objective nature wholesale, or the objective world of mechanical industry. Their pæan to machinery is really a worship of a Panhard racing-car, or a workshop where guns or Teddy bears are made, and not a deliberate and reasoned enthusiasm for the possibilities that lie in this new spectacle of machinery; of the *use* it can be put to in art. Machinery should be regarded as a new resource, as though it were a new mineral or oil, to be used and put to different uses than those for which it was originally intended. A machinery for making the parts of a 6in. Mk. 19 gun should be regarded apart from its function. Absorbed into the æsthetic consciousness it would no longer *make* so much as a pop-gun : its function thenceforward would change, and through its agency emotions would be manufactured, related, it is true, to its primitive efficiency, shinyness, swiftness or slowness, elegance or power, but its meaning transformed. It is of exactly the same importance, and in exactly the same category, as a wave on a screen by Korin, an Odalisque of Ingres, a beetle of a sculptor of the XVIII. dynasty. Ingres lived in the midst of a great appetite for the pseudo-classic : the Egyptian sculptor lived in the presence of a great veneration for the beetle. Korin's contemporaries possessed a high susceptibility and sentiment for the objects of the natural world. Korin's formal wave-lines is the same impulse as Balla's Linee Andamentali : the Beetle and the Odalisque are both sleek and solid objects ! Ingres probably did not believe in the Odalisque as an Odalisque, although realising the admirable uses to which she could be put. The Egyptian probably found the beetle objectionable until transformed into stone. And there should be no obligation to supply veneration, or to behave like a religious fanatic about a sausage machine or a locomotive : other people can supply that, indeed should do so about something or other. If the world *would only build temples to Machinery* in the abstract then everything would be perfect. The painter and sculptor would have plenty to do, and could, in complete peace and suitably honoured, pursue their trade without further trouble. Else what is the use of taking all the useful Gods and Goddesses away, and leaving the artist with no rôle in the social machine, except that of an entertainer, or a business man?

Imagine Koyetzu, Signorelli, or the sculptor who carved the head of Akhenaton or of the wife of the Sheik-el-Beled, alive painting and carving, to-day. They would have been in the profoundest sense the same artists. But just as a painter may use one medium one day and another the next; so far more than

simply traces of the fact that they had seen the machines that play such a part in our existence would be found in their inventions. Just as the sculptors of Nineveh put the lions that were such immediate objects in their life, to good use in their reliefs; or the painters of the Sung period the birds and landscapes found by them in their wilfully secluded lives; so it was inevitable today that artists should get into their inventions (figures, landscapes, or abstractions) something of the lineaments and character of machinery. An artist could excel, no doubt, who never suggested in his pictures acquaintance with anything more ferreous than a mushroom. But you would not be liable, I suppose, to pick a quarrel with the artists of Asshur because they used the lions at their door?

This ground has to be gone over, and thus much reasserted, for the purposes of the new adjustments I propose.

The Artist's Luck

THE best artists of the Sung period lived a secluded life, very luckily for them. It was considered the thing to inhabit the fairly distant country and live in intercourse with the objects of Nature. When this fashion passed, and a painter had to live within hailing distance of the court, the pictures produced showed an immediate decline in quality. That is *one* lesson.

The scenes in the Assyrian bas-reliefs from Nineveh were produced by an artist who led an unlucky kind of life. He was hurried about by the king in his razzias and hunts: no sooner had the party (a marauding or a hunting one) returned to the city than the harassed sculptors had to rush to their workrooms and produce by the next morning a complete series of bas-reliefs describing in what was apparently considered a flattering way the exploits of their diabolical idiot of a master. For no sooner had he slept off the fatigue caused by the last of an incessant series of displacements than he insisted on seeing what he had looked like to his band of performing sculptors during the last week or two. Their heads probably fell like apples in an autumn wind; though there is seemingly no record of his ever having had sculptors enough to build up their skulls into a pyramid. How they succeeded in doing such good lions it is difficult to say. Perhaps the ones who did the good lions were left in peace sometimes. But on the whole, a sculptor fated to work for Asshur's deputy would no doubt have regarded the Sung hermit as the luckiest old yellow crab that ever painted.

It has occurred to me that we might be worse off than we are. But I can see no reason why we should not be better off: hence, partly, this pamphlet.

PART II

The Artist Older than the Fish

Section 1. *The Artist Older than the Fish.*
,, 2. *The Physiognomy of Our Time.*
,, 3. *Fashion.*

The Artist Older than the Fish

THE artist goes back to the fish. The few centuries that separate him from the savage are a mere flea-bite to the distance his memory must stretch if it is to strike the fundamental slime of creation. And it is the condition, the very first gusto of creation in this scale of life in which we are set, that he must reach, before he, in his turn, can create!

The creation of a work of art is an act of the same description as the evolution of wings on the sides of a fish, the feathering of its fins; or the invention of a weapon within the body of a hymenopter to enable it to meet the terrible needs of its life. The ghostly and burning growths, the walking twigs and flying stones, the two anguished notes that are the voice of a being, the vapid twitter, the bellows of age-long insurrection and discontent, the complacent screech, all may be considered as types of art, all equally perfect, but not all equally desirable.

The attitude of instructed people as regards "the artist" has changed. It is mixed up with, and depends a good deal on, the exactitude of their application of this term. With the grotesque prostitution of the word Artist, and its loose, indeed very loose and paltry meaning in this country, I will deal in a separate section. A German philosopher, living in the heyday of last century German music, accepted the theory of an æsthetic justification of the universe. Many people play with this notion, just as they play with Art. But we should have to disembarrass "art" of a good deal of cheap adhesive matter, and cheap and pretty adhesive people, before it could appear a justification for anything at all; much less for such a gigantic and, from every point of view, dubious concern as the Universe!

The artist's function is to create—to make something; and *not* to *make something pretty,* as dowagers, dreamers, and dealers here suppose. In any synthesis of the universe, the harsh, the hirsute, the enemies of the rose, must be built in for the purposes as much of a fine æsthetic, as of a fine logical, structure. And having removed the sentimental gulf that often has, in the course of their chequered career, kept Sense and Beauty apart, we may at this stage of the proceedings even refer to their purposes as one.

Fabre describes the creative capabilities of certain beetles, realisable on their own bodies; beasts with a record capacity for turning their form and colour impulses into living flesh. These beetles can convert their faces into hideously carved and detestable masks, can grow out of their bodies menacing spikes, and throw up on top of their heads sinister headdresses, overnight. Such changes in their personal appearance, conceived to work on the psychology of their adversaries, is possibly not a very profound or useful invention, but it is surely a considerable feat. Any art

worth the name is, at the least, a feat of this description. The New Guinea barred and whitewashed masks are an obvious parallel. But any invention or phantasy in painting or carving is such. As to the wing mechanism that first lifted a creature off the ground, and set it spinning or floating through the air, you must call Shakespeare in to compete with it. Ma Yuan we can consider, roughly speaking, as the creator of the first tree; or substitute for him the best artist, who has painted the best tree, that you can remember.

The more sensible we grow about the world, the more sensible we grow about the artist. We are really more in sympathy with a bird or a fish to-day than we have been for a considerable time. And while people at large are being forced, by snobbery, into a less anthropomorphic mood, they find, with some awakening of respect, traces and odd indications of the artist's presence everywhere they go beyond their simian pale. The artist, we all agree, was the first scientist! His " inhumanity " is so old that he looks with considerable contempt on the upstart and fashionable growth that the last twenty years has produced!

We have got out of our anthropomorphism, then, to this extent: that it is to-day in reality as respectable to be a fish, as it was in the latter part of the last century to be a savage. The Robert Louis Stevenson, George Borrow, " back to Nature " Englishman (not an artist type at all) is as dead as a doornail. It is the artist type, even, that has prevailed in the philosopher's mind, its dogmatism correcting itself by a careful liaison with the spirit of the artist.

We no longer dream about earlier communities, knowing more about them, or long for some pristine animal fierceness or abundant and unblemished health. We realise how every good thing dates, and grasp better the complexities of life's compensations. That does not mean that we are satisfied with to-day's conditions any more than we covet the Hereros or Hawaian natives to a morbid degree. Generally speaking, an intelligent and well-adjusted modern man does not place his paradise in the Prairie or in the heart of some bronzed Highland clan, although envying the great and simple assets that such plain conditions imply. He has caught a glimpse of something more subtle and more satisfying. He really at last has a vision of his own; it plunges him back to more refreshing energies and oblivions than the noisy and snarling claptrap of the tribe and clan. " The artist " was formally identified with the savage or the school-boy to a disobliging extent, largely by thinkers impatient with the retrograde gushings and heroics of a type of rhyming or picture-painting crétin, as conservative as a woman, that the thinker was perpetually meeting, full of noisy Kiplingesque protest, at the opening of every street marked out by his sage mind for draining and sanification (to be " saved " because of its " picturesque bits "); and through

constantly detecting this absurd bechevelured figure daubing pretty colours, like a malicious and stupid urchin, on every idea that had been pronounced moribund, and that was destined for the dustbin. But clearly this individual, this masquerader, this bag of schoolboy conceits, this old-clo merchant, loaded with rusty broadswords, Spanish knives, sombreros, oaths, the arch-priest of the romantic Bottle, was not an artist-type. Gauguin was not an artist-type. He was a savage type addicted to painting. He was in reality very like his sunny friends in the Marquesas Islands. He was in as limited a way a savage as an American negro is typic, or a Jew over-raced and over-sexed. These are savages that go in for art for motives of vanity or disguised sex, in fact the individuals on whom the " sensational " theorists build their generalisations about the artist. Gauguin appears like a vulgar tripper by the side of Cézanne.

The music of Carmen, the Prince Igor ballet, all the " savage stuff " that always gets the audience, is where the artist must be supposed, logically, to have his home. The truth is that in the trek of the imagination, of however feeble powers, from any man's Present outwards towards anything, the first region struck is the Savage time, clash of cymbals, howl of clansmen, voluptuous belly-dance, Caucasian cartridge-pockets, castanettes, vendettas and corybantics. That is about as far as a respectable Public-school fancy takes you. It is like a scene from the more boring of the Russian ballets or a Victory Ball. And there *all* the " Chelsea artists " are to be found, every form of artist, far too many artists, in fact, and far too few " sauvages purs." But the sometimes festive philosopher is a bit of an " artist " of that sort himself. And it has been from such regions and hobnobbings that he has borne away his very firm convictions on the nature of " artists," and their abode in time. It is only since a variety of more adventurous men have pushed out beyond this sententious belt of savage life into lonelier regions, that a new type of " artist " has been met with, far rarer and far more venturesome, who has disposed already of much of the prestige of the dense herds of a manifestly different and falsely labelled species.

The Physiognomy of our Time

LIFE, simply, however vivid and tangible, is too material to be anything but a mechanism, and the seagull is not far removed from the hydroplane. Whether a stone flies and copulates, or remains respectably in its place, half hiding the violet from the eye, is little matter. It is just as remarkable to be so hard and big as to be so busy and passionate; though owing to our busyness and passion we have a shoppy interest in the hurrying insect that we do not display for the stone. Life has begun, as language, for instance, begins, with a crowding and redundance that must be ordered and curtailed if the powerfullest instincts of life, even, are to triumph. Where everything is mutually destructive, and where immense multitudes of activities and modes of life have to be scrapped and excised, it is important not to linger in ecstasy over *everything*, simply because it *is;* or to sentimentalise about Life where creation is still possible and urgent; where much life, although pretty, powerful or bewitching, interferes with and opposes the life of something still more bewitching and strong.

The genius of the executant in art, the curiosity of the amateur, imply in their indiscriminate tasting and the promiscuity of their talent, an equal perfection in everything that succeeds in living, happens to move as swiftly, or far more swiftly, for its size, than the swiftest motor-car; or to fly as infallibly as the most perfected plane we can imagine. And Marinetti (with his Caruso tenor-instincts of inflation, and mellifluous self-aggrandisement and tiptoe tirade), was, in his rant about *speed,* in the same position. He might, ten thousand years before our wonderful time, have ranted about the lizard or the dragon-fly, with a deeper wonder at the necessities and triumphs their powers of displacement implied.

An act of creation in art may be as far removed from the life of the fashionable chattering animal as the amoeba from the monkey. Truth is as strange a bird as ever flew in a Chinese forest. What shall we do with it? Does it require a drab and fickle world to shine in? Can it thrive in anything but a rich and abundant setting? Shall it be allowed to become extinct, made war on by some ill-favoured reptile? Should it be caught and sent to the Zoo and fed by horrible Cockney brats on bastard buns? It is in any case difficult to admit the claims of the stuffed birds we have occasion to mention to peck at and refill themselves on the carcase of this more splendid creature.

We know that all our efforts indicate a desire to perfect and continue to create; to order, regulate, disinfect and stabilise our life. What I am proposing is activity, more deliberate and more intense, on the material we know and on our present very fallible

stock. But that stock must be developed, not in the sense of the prize bullock, not simply fattened, elated, and made sleek with ideas proper to a ruminant species: but made the soul of things in this universe; until as a bird a man would be a first-rate growth, and even as a bullock, be stalled in a Palace. Let us substitute ourselves everywhere for the animal world; replace the tiger and the cormorant with some invention of our mind, so that we can intimately control this new Creation. The danger, as it would appear at present, and in our first flight of substitution and remounting, is evidently that we should become overpowered by our creation, and become as mechanical as a tremendous insect world, all our awakened reason entirely disappeared. Immediately we can put a great deal behind us.

When I put forward my opinion that the aspect of life, and the forms that surrounds us, *might*, perchance—without too great sacrifice on the part of the painter, without too great a disturbance for our dear conservatisms and delicate obstructionisms—be modified, I start from Buddha rather than from Lipton, Maximilian Harden or Madame Tussaud. But I start from Buddha with so much of the Fashion and spirit of our time as he would have developed living in our midst to-day; familiar with and delighting in the pleasant inventions and local colour of our age; drinking Buchanan's Scotch whisky with relish, smoking Three Nuns; familiar with the smell of Harris tweeds, Euthymol, and the hot pestiferous Tube wind. I do not recommend any abstraction of our mental structure, or more definite unclothing than to strip till we come to the energetic lines required. So we have visualised a respectable and legendary figure, appreciating Dunhill or Dubec tobacco, with no aversion to seeing Mae Marsh, or paying homage to that uncanny piece of meat flinging itself indignantly about nightly under the hungry nose of the Monster of Mirth, the sturdy and priceless ape, George Robey.

Supposing that we destroyed every vestige of animal and insect life on this planet, and substituted machines of our invention, under immediate human control, for this mass of mechanisms that we had wiped out, what would be the guiding principle of these new masses? The same as at present, the wild animal and insect forms? Would we domesticate the universe, and make it an immense hive working for our will, scavenging, honey-making, fetching and carrying for man; or what? It is not a bird-like act for a man to set himself coldly to solve the riddle of the bird and understand it; as it is human to humanise it. So we do not wish to become a vulture or a swallow. We want to enjoy our consciousness, but to enjoy it in all forms of life, and use all modes and processes for our satisfaction. Having said *all* forms, we get back once more to the indiscriminate, mechanical and unprogressive world that we first considered. Only now we have substituted, in fancy, an approximate human invention for every

form of animate life. It is evidently not this hungry, frigid and devouring existence of the scorpion, the wild cat or the eagle that we are disposed to perpetuate. Every living form is a miraculous mechanism, however, and every sanguinary, vicious or twisted need produces in Nature's workshop a series of mechanical arrangements extremely suggestive and interesting for the engineer, and almost invariably beautiful or interesting for the artist. The Marinetti rant around machinery is really, at bottom, adulation for the universe of beings, and especially the world of insects.

So the froth of a Futurist at the mere sight of a Vickers' biplane is the same as a foaming ode to the dragon-fly or the sea-gull; not for any super-mechanical attribute of the fly or the bird, but simply because one is a flying insect and the other a bird. And this all-inclusiveness of the direction of our thought is the result, primarily, of the all-inclusiveness of our knowledge.

The "gothic" stonemason, whose acquaintance with other forms of art than those he practised was no doubt relatively nil, was better off than we are. Similarly, the Modern Man, the abstraction that we all go to make, in absorbing the universe of beings unto himself and his immediate life as we have seen him, with his mechanical inventions, commencing to do, is equally in the position of the dilettante. What is his synthesis going to be? So far it has been endless imitation; he has done nothing with his machinery but that. Will he arrive where there is no power, enjoyment or organisation of which other living beings have been capable of which he will not, in his turn, and by a huge mechanical effort, possess the means? If he is amused enough with his mind to give that carte blanche, his individual existence as an ape-like animal will grow less and less important. As already his body in no way indicates the scope of his personal existence (as the bear's or the barnacle's indicates theirs) it cannot any more in pictorial art be used as his effective delimitation or sign. But that is not to say that a piece of cheese or a coal scuttle can. There is in the inorganic world an organism that is his: and which, as much as his partially superseded body, is in a position of mastery and higher significance over the cheese and saucepan.

Fashion

FASHION is of the nature of an aperient. It is a patent stimulus of use only to the constipated and the sluggish. It is the specific for the fifth rate, to correct the stagnations that are perpetually gathering where life is poor and inactive. The Victorian age produced a morass of sugary comfort and amiableness, indulged men so much that they became guys of sentiment. Against this " sentimentality " people of course reacted. So the brutal tap was turned on, and for fifty years it will be the thing to be brutal, " unemotional." Against the absurdities that this " inhuman " fashion does inevitably breed, you will need some powerful corrective in due course. And so your fashions go, a matter of the cold or the hot tap, simply. The majority of people, the Intellectuals, the Art World, are perpetually in some raw extreme. They are " of their time " as a man is typically of his country, truculently Prussian or delightfully French. So there are some people who like cold in its place and hot in its place, cold and hot out of their place, or the bath mixed to some exact nuance. Actually how it works out is that Cézanne, André Derain, Giotto, the best stone carver of the VII. dynasty in Egypt, the Hottentot of talent, are far more alike and nearer to each other in their reactions, than any well-defined type man of the contiguous ages of Queen Victoria and George V., with sixty years only separating them. It is at no time unnecessary to point out that what takes the glamour and starch out of the Chinese pigtail and the white hood of the Carmelite is when the pigtail proceeds from the scalp of Lao-Tse and the nun's coif surrounds the adorable features of Saint Theresa. East is East and West is West, and at a Macaroni meeting a post-Georgian swell would bristle with horror, and behave as the cat and the dog. But some men have the luck to possess a considerable release from these material attachments, and a powerful ear that enables them, like a woman in a restaurant, to overhear the conversations at all the neighbouring tables; to gaze at a number of revolutions at once, and catch the static and unvarying eye of Aristotle, a few revolutions away, or the later and more heterodox orb of Christ.

PART III

Paris

Section 1. *French Realism.*
,, 2. *The Uses of Fashion.*
,, 3. *Cézanne.*
,, 4. *The General Tendency in Paris.*
,, 5. *Matisse and Dérain.*
,, 6. *Picasso.*

French Realism

THE French talent is neither quite happy nor satisfactory in its "Classic," its "Romantic," or its "Scientific" manifestations. As a great "classic" or traditional artist you get Ingres. About him at present a considerable cult is in progress of springing up: whether it is a dealer's manœuvre or a piece of French (and Allied) sentiment it is difficult to say. Probably it is both. But in the teeth of any fashion it should be easy to discern that Ingres, with all his dreary theatrical costume pieces of "classical" subjects is not as satisfactory an artist as Giotto, let us say, nor for that matter, as Raphael. His malicious and meticulous portraits give him a permanent and peculiar place. But it is not the place, nor quite the kind of place, that is being prepared for him. To admire Racine or Corneille, similarly, is an amusing game, but not a scientifically or emotionally exact proceeding. If it is true, for instance, that Racine should be praised for his psychological insight, I prefer to find that without going into such a barren region to look for it. As a "Romantic," again, the Frenchman is a failure compared to the better equipped romantics of more romantic nations. Delacroix and Géricault are not as satisfactorily romantic as Turner; Victor Hugo's novels are not as good romances as Hoffman's or Dostoievsky's. Dostoievsky is nearer the real and permanent romance of life. Turner is a delightful dreamer, nearer to the reality of romance than an equivalent Frenchman.

When he becomes scientific in a reaction against Romance or Traditionalism, as in the case of the Impressionists, or Pointillistes, in painting, the Frenchman becomes *too* scientific, in that likewise, to be quite real. The next thing you notice, having come to these conclusions, is that a variety of Frenchmen, Stendhal, Flaubert, Villon, Cézanne, Pascal, a big list—who form such a group, if stuck together, as to be more numerous than all the specific successes of another country put together—do not fit into the French national cadre. They are less local than the successes of other modern European countries. Dostoievsky, the most intoxicated of his worshippers must concede, has the blemish of being sometimes altogether too "Russian" to be bearable; too epileptic and heavy-souled. Turner had too much of the national prettiness of the "dreamy" Englishman.

French Realism means, if it has a meaning, what these best Frenchmen had: they were almost realler than anything in the modern world. They have made France the true leader-country. But it is not what people generally mean, in this land or elsewhere, when they talk about the "realism of the French." Reality is what you want, and not "realism." And to find that, you must watch for some happy blending of the vitality of "Romance," the coldness of "science," and the moderation and cohesion of a "classical" mind.

The Uses of Fashion

HOW are we to regard the movement in painting that has succeeded the Impressionist movement? As the revenge of Raphael, a pilgrimage to Poussin, a reawakening of austerity, a barbarous or a civilised event? Creative Line once more asserted itself; the rather formless naturalism of the Impressionist evolved into what were once more synthetic and constructed works. The tenets of catching the Moment on the hop, of photographing that Moment of Nature with the eye, and so forth, gave way before the onslaught of Invention, recuperated, and come out of its disgrace, dating from the time of its supposed liaison with the Romantics. Impressionism was really a period of decay itself, or one of humdrum activity; a scavenging the ground after the riots and too popular festivities of the Romantics.

But then what you will base your views of these movements on will really depend on what latitude you give, in your mind, to human enterprise: how closely you consider the possibilities of any short individual life: and whether fanciful claims of Progress excite you or not. Three or four human types—about as many as there are large sub-divisions of the human race—Yellow, White, Negritic—wrangle and wrestle about with each other, rise, flourish and decay, then once more ascend.

The only flaw in this parallel is that the Black race may die out, the Yellow predominate, or all races mingle in a resultant grey-yellow mixture for some time. But the types of mind are likelier stubbornly to persist and maintain their struggle for mastery. There are different kinds of Romantics, different sorts of Classics, and so forth, but in any movement you may be sure that one of these great warring sub-divisions is at the bottom of the disturbance. It may be a composite movement. A movement at once Scientific and Classic is possible for instance. And all individuals are very mixed. Cézanne, considering himself probably an Impressionist, as he nominally was, only with, he would tell himself, a way of his own of doing Impressionism, has turned out to be something like a pure Classic. Dérain, one of the two or three most conspicuous figures in French painting to-day, is almost a pure Romantic, in feeling, and capable of every sentimentality. This is natural in a man for so long a disciple of Gauguin, and the pasticheur of Rousseau the douanier, as we find him in his ballet, "La Boutique Fantasque." Picasso has dealt, in earlier periods of his work, in every sentimental and romantic flavour. Most men with energy and illusion enough in them to do anything have something of the complete, composite character that I have in the preceding section attributed to the chosen, most universal Frenchman.

But a perfectly balanced, divinely composite *movement* is an impossibility. Anything so intelligent or so good as that is out of the question. For in the first place that class is such a small one that the rare existence of such individuals is quite independent of movements. And, in the second place, were there numbers of such men co-existing their aggregate of work would not be a movement. It would be the reverse of that. Any movement of such an obvious sort as we are considering would bring them away from their centre. And for that they are disinclined.

So any movement is largely either a Romantic invasion or reaction: a Classical or a Scientific one. It usually will have the character of these limiting sub-divisions. It is the swing of the pendulum from side to side: it is the superficial corrective and fashionable play of the general sea of men. So all men must wear black in one generation, green in the next, then white, then black again: for that uniformity is a law of regulated life that cannot be contradicted. Fashion is the sort of useful substitute for conviction. At present it is the substitute for religion.

So you get the cry against tradition, the cry against emotion, or against superstition, or against science. Men's consciousness can only grasp one of these ideas at a time: they can only do any useful work under the spell of Fashion; that is, the one limited conformity prescribed for their generation.

The work of any artist living under this spell of fashion, unable to function without this stimulus, and to see beyond this convention, dates very quickly and is seldom remembered after his death, except through some prank of the erudite, or some accident of history. But this slavery to fashion is a different thing from the acceptance of the form, the data, and atmosphere of a time. Rowlandson could evidently have existed, from the testimony of his work, in no other time than the eighteenth century. He *used* the spirit, the form-content, the dress, the impressionability of his time with an uncanny completeness. But evidently had he been a dependent on fashion he could have done nothing of the sort. For he would have been far too afraid of what he handled, and far too obliged to it, to develop it in that bold and personal way.

I would apply this analysis of the general character of movements to present events in the art of painting in the following way.

To a good painter, with some good work to do in this world, the only point of the new movement, or whatever you like to call it, was simply that it changed the outlook and pre-occupation of the living section of art from one mode to another. To look for anything more than the swing of the pendulum would be an absurdity. That *more* is supplied at the moment of every movement by the individual. And the painter who is at the same time an individual and the possessor of that "more," is not likely to try and find in a movement what he has in himself. Still, the individual, although ideally independent of and superior to the flux and reflux,

is beholden to conditions and to the society in which he finds himself for the possibility of the full development of his gifts. So the "movement" in art, like the attitude of the community to art, is not a thing to be superior about, though it is a thing you may be superior to. And really it is the same type of man who displays a sceptical aloofness and superiority as regards any activity directed to *improve* the conditions around us (*i.e.*, our own condition) who shows himself the most unimaginative and cringingly fashionable in respect of what he produces in the art he follows: the most assiduously up-to-date, the most afraid of opinion.

So this movement in painting really looked as though it were going to be the goods from the point of view of its uses for the best talents. Opportunities, through the successful even victorious progress with which the campaign began, seemed to be indicated for the full inventiveness of the human mind to get once more into painting, and its right to be there sure of a general recognition. This was at least a refreshing prospect, after the Impressionist years, during which this full inventiveness could show itself in painting only in some ingenious disguise, or risk denunciation: or else pretend that it had really come to look at the gas-meter, to grind colours, or to scrub the floor. All this seemed for the best: very much for the best! But naturally the ragtag and bobtail of the "movement" would not look at it in that light. For them it would be Le Mouvement, as who should say the Social Revolution or La Carmagnole, presided over by God Fashion, who is another form of Dame Liberty.

So, has the worst happened? As far as Paris is concerned, has the revolution turned into a joke, as it is always liable to do in a Latin city? Or into some crafty bourgeois reaction?

Let us recapitulate the possibilities: the reason that would induce an individual painter to support this movement, engage in it, and use it as a material optimistically. The creative line, structure, Imagination, untrammelled by any pedantry of form or of naturalist taboo, a more vigorous and permanent shaping of the work undertaken: these were the inducements and the prizes. The movement also developed a cult of experiment which allowed of any combinations and inventive phantasies. All the scientific notions as they came along of any useful application could be used without a foolish outcry. But this liberty and these opportunities also begot a necessity for moderation or rather *concentration* which would have been a vice in any age of repression and academic tyranny. The painters have been thankful for this disembarrassing of the ground for them, and have been delighted at these splendid opportunities. They do not want to *lose* what has been won by an infatuation for some effete mode that there is no rhyme or reason to succumb to, apart from the megalomania of an individual artist, or the commercial promptings

of some tortuous and sordid game. They do not wish to be involved in the mere acrobatics of freedom. Freedom bristles with unexpected tyrannies. It would not have been easy for Cézanne, the laborious innovator and giver of this freedom, to do so; but any very able and at the same time resourceful artist could invent you a new mode *every week* without any difficulty; some new stylistic twist; some new adaptation of a scientific notion. This is not, however, what is needed. If he can do nothing *else* than that, he must be allowed to go his way, and his chief praise be a pæan to his agility.

How we *need* and can *use* this freedom that we have is to invent a mode that will answer to the great mass sensibility of our time. We want to construct hardily and profoundly without a hard-dying autocratic convention to dog us and interfere with our proceedings. But we want *one* mode, for there *is* only one mode for any one time, and all the other modes are for other times. Except as objects of technical interest and indirect stimulus, they have nothing to do with us. And it is not on the sensibility of the amateur, which is always corrupted, weak, and at the mercy of any wind that blows, that the painter should wish to build. It is on the block sensibility, the profoundest and most personal foundations of his particular time.

Fashion is not always the exact physiognomy of a time. And every physiognomy in any case is made to be changed.

What we really require are a few men who will *use* Fashion, the ruler of any age, the avenue through which alone that age can be approached to get something out of it, to build something in Fashion's atmosphere which can best flourish there, and which is the best thing that therein could flourish.

Picasso and the men associated with him seem to have taken their liberty at once too seriously and not seriously enough. They have taken Fashion, too, too seriously on the one hand, and on the other they have not used it as they might, or done with it what they could. I do not see amongst them all, except possibly in Matisse, a man who is above Fashion, or one unimpressed by it.

Cézanne

WHEN this very useful process of corrective reaction occurred in the art centres of Europe twenty years ago, the Impressionists came in for the customary heavy reversal of opinion. But the root theories of the Impressionists remained in the consciousness of the new men, and completely as they might imagine they had discarded Impressionism, Naturalism, and the rest of that movement, Impressionist compunctions and fetishes could be found at every turn in the new painting. There was nothing wrong with this, for the Impressionists did much good work, and their experience was a useful one to inherit. This would no doubt not be apparent to the benighted body of the movement, but must have been to the leaders. And it was these leaders who cast round and went through their immediate heritage once more before finally discarding it. Here in turn the familiar faces of Dégas, Manet, Renoir came up for inspection; also Cézanne. Cézanne came up rather crabbed and reluctant, a little aloof, and with something in his eye liable to awake suspicion. And sure enough suspicion awoke. In fact, what the journalist would describe as a " shrewd " suspicion grew up that this till then thought to be second-class artist, rather incompetent, though well-meaning old fellow, had something very useful and new in him; and was probably more a portion of the new sensibility, and possibly of more intrinsic importance altogether, than any of his Impressionist contemporaries.

This suspicion grew into a furious conviction that a very great artist had been unearthed. He became the most fashionable art figure in the world. So much so that it is impossible to write three lines about painting to-day without mentioning his name. Matisse has not much to do with Cézanne. But the whole cubist movement comes out of him. Picasso is described by Lhote, the new apostle of David, as the Interpreter of Cézanne. More apples have been painted during the last fifteen years than have been eaten by painters in as many centuries. And all is for the best in the best of all possible worlds. But—— Once more, it is a pity that this figure is so solitary (which means so much under present-day conditions of individual exaltation). The only advantage is that at least there you have a condition favourable to homogeneity and concentration of effort. This one, very narrow personality, enamoured of bulk, of simplicity, of constructive vision, sombre and plain as could be found, should be a boulder against a diffusion of the inroad of anything like a dilettante, indiscriminating sensibility. But possibly the weakness inherent in this first condition, of a lonely source, has left a loophole for the irresponsible, disintegrating passage of the second. I do not feel that Cézanne would have agreed to Ingres, much less to David. But he would be asked to-day to agree to Everything, five minutes devoted to each.

The General Tendency in Paris

IN Paris to-day there is a mass of " advanced " work being done, in the art of Painting and Design, which can roughly be classified as follows, not necessarily chronologically. For inevitably the degree in which a painting at present is " modern " is decided simply by its relative " abstractness." This is an unavoidable result of the startling innovation resulting from the progressive experimentation all over Europe during the last twenty years in painting. Whereas formerly it was a question whether you should paint a naked lady refined to some Greek type of the " beautiful " animal, or should choose her coarse, and give the Public a bit of the " real stuff," some lumpy Flemish frame squatting on the edge of a dingy soapy bath (approximating to the undraped Saskia, to Dégas or the facile Japanese realists) ; and whereas over periods of fifty years these opposing females were bandied about, and hurled at the head of the opposing faction; and it took half a century for the " Modern Art " of the time reluctantly to espouse one beauty, having laboriously divorced the last; to-day it has been found possible and expedient, within the trivial space of ten years, entirely to eliminate from the face of the earth the naked, clothed or other lady—every vestige or tatter even of a human being at all, from the horizon of the purest, of the latest, art. This is how the Public views this matter. And the Public, the ruffled, shaken, gasping but rather pleased, though not very helpful public, influences in his turn the Artist; and so back again.

Among the few hundred painters who form the façade of the temple of Fashion in Art, according to this rough and obvious classification, Kandinsky is the most advanced artist in Europe; Matisse, I suppose, of the same elect *avantgarde,* is the most leisurely, or the least furibundly outstripping. His " funniness " consists of distortion, of a simplicity akin to the facile images of French caricature, and a certain vivacity of tint, often, in his pictures.

To proceed with the classification of the modes of the new movement in Paris. Cézannism is by far the most widespread mode. As Cézanne may also be said to be at the bottom of " Cubism," he has really effected by the tremendous sincerity and certainty of his work a revolution in painting, and has made new eyes for a crowd of men. In the French show being held at Heal's Gallery in the Tottenham Court Road (August 7, 1919), fifty per cent. of the work is monotonously Cézannesque. In the best represented painter there, Modigliani, the heads of his sitters incline to this side or that because Mrs. Cézanne during the interminable sittings she must have undergone, drooped her head stoically and brutally in that way. She is, as it were, the leader of a Chorus of, from the standpoint of the theatre queue, very

plain and even preposterous females. Similarly, that the hands meet and are crossed in the lap is a trick or habit in the search for the compact and simple that was Cézanne's occupation. Is there any lack of apples on tables? Do jugs abound? Are rigid napkins and tablecloths in evidence? Yes, they are everywhere in this exhibition, as in every other modern exhibition of the last eight years. Most of these things are a little more garishly coloured than Cézanne's still-lifes were, and side currents arrive in the midst of the bed of apples and crockery, from Vuillard, or from Matisse or Van Gogh. But Cézanne is at the bottom of it, and will be for many a day.

The Futurists, and their French followers, have as the basis of their æsthetic the Impressionists generally. They are simply a rather abstruse and complex form of the 1880 French Impressionists. Their dogma is a brutal rhetorical Zolaism, on its creative side, saturated with the voyou respect and gush about Science, the romance of machinery engraven on their florid banner. On the technical side the Futurist paintings are again in their creative essence purely 1880 Impressionism, worked on by the same dogged logic, carried much further, and tinctured with Braquism and a score more odds and ends.

Matisse and Dérain

MATISSE at his best is certainly as good a painter as any working in Paris to-day. He possesses more vitality than Picasso; and he appears to have more stability—as a result possibly of that. I am not concerned in this pamphlet with recapitulating the phases of the modern movement, so much as analysing a late development of it, and only giving so much general matter again as is necessary to remind a non-specialist public of the rough points of the position up to date. Matisse has had far less influence than Picasso, and is in every way a different mentality. Dérain, similarly, beyond influencing Picasso at a certain period, does not come within the scope of my immediate purpose. He is a great artist of impeccable taste. If I enlarge this treatise to book form, I shall devote sections to these artists.

Of the names of artists working in Paris well known to us here, most are those of foreigners, not Frenchmen. Matisse, Picasso, Gris, Modigliani are Belgian, Spanish, Italian. But outside of the large groups of artists working in Paris there are other European artists, some of equal note, and of equal importance in the history of this movement. Kandinsky among them, was, I believe, the first painter to make pictures of purely non-representative forms and colours. And Kandinsky, with his Expressionism, is probably the most logical of the artists directing their attention to abstract experiment. He is not obsessed by Natures Mortes; nor does one find in him the rather obvious obsession with common objects simply because they are common (which is a similarly limiting mode of the mind to the predilection for important and obviously significant objects). He differs from the Paris group in his interest for the disembodied world and the importance he attaches to this new avenue of research and inspiration. Actually his pictures possess too much of the vagueness and the effect of a drunken tracery that all spirit drawings have.

The painters working in England find no place in this pamphlet, but not because I do not esteem them. Nothing but a stupid parochial snobbism could make a half-dozen English names I can think of, seem any less weighty than any half-dozen French ones producible at this moment. As to the Jewish painters, they are evidently of the same race and talent everywhere. And there are at least as many here as in Paris.

First, this is not a review of painting in Europe. It is primarily an indication of what I consider is the only line that the painting of to-day can take if it is to justify itself, and not fizzle out in a fireworks of ingenious pseudo-scientific stunts, and ringing of stylistic changes on this mode and that. And the extra-studio preoccupations, the effort towards construction that I re-

commend, conflict with the spirit that appears to be guiding the cubist movement in Paris. The emotional impulse of the latest phases of that movement looks to me contradictory to any creative impulse in painting. And more clearly, it seems to preclude the development of any sensibility but that of an exasperated egotism. The eye becomes a little gluttonous instrument of enjoyment; or watches from the centre of its brain web for more flies and yet more flies. It would eventually become as mechanical and stupid as a spider, if it is not so already.

An effete and hysterical mechanism certainly threatens every art. A sorrowful Eastern fatigue wedded to a diabolical energy for materialistic reactions; a showy and desiccated scepticism, wedded to a tearful sentimentality as sweet and heavy as molasses. What is to be done about that? But that is a problem for another day.

Well, then, what I propose is that as much attention might be given—it would end by being as concrete—to the masses and entire form-content of life as has been given by the Nature-morte school to the objects on a table. If architecture and every related —as we say, applied—art were affected and woken up, the same thing would be accomplished on a big scale as is at present attempted on a small scale. All the energies of art would not be centred and congested in a few exasperated spots of energy, it is true, or in a few individuals. But the individual, even, would lose nothing by it, with respect to the quality of his pictures. And a nobility and cohesion would be attained that under present conditions it is difficult to visualise. Most people grasping at such a notion have stopped short at some fantastic Utopian picture.

But to enable you to arrive at a fair estimate of my conclusions, I must give you the analysis through which I come by them in detail. And I cannot avoid some investigation of the record and evident moyens, a critical survey, of Picasso.

Picasso

PABLO PICASSO is one of the ablest living painters. It would be impossible to display more ability. In addition to this, he is extremely resourceful and inventive. The back of his talent is too broad to suffer from even an avalanche of criticism. It is the consciousness of this that makes it more easy for me to state plainly his case as I see it.

This is, put pretty directly, what I feel about him.

With remarkable power he has refertilised many extinct modes, and authenticated interesting new and specifically scientific notions. He has given El Greco a new bit of life on the Catalan hills in his painting of Spanish shepherds, oxherds and vagrants. He has revivified a great artist's line there, another's colour combinations here, and has played the skilfulest variations. Since every great creative painter must at the same time have great executive ability—the more dexterity he can command the better—it is always difficult to decide where this hand-training does or should leave off, and where imaginative invention, apart from the delights and triumphs of execution, may or does begin.

Briefly, Picasso's periods are as follows. His earliest work contained a variety of experiments: women sitting in cafés in reds; Daumier-like scenes, but more fragile and rather definitely sentimentalised; then a painting of a poor family standing by the side of a languid and mournful bit of sea, their bones appearing through their clothes, their faces romantically haggard and delicate, and a general air of Maeterlinck or some modern German "poet-painter" all over it, has been widely reproduced. (Title: "Pauvres au bord de la Mer.") Then came a period during which Dérain's Gauguinism appealed to him. El Greco was a still more prolonged infatuation and source of study. Then Cézanne arrived in his painting. The portraits of Miss Stein and of Monsieur Sagot are of that time.

African carvings supplied the next step, in conjunction with the Marquesas Islands and André Dérain. These solid and static models, African, Polynesian, Aix, drove out the Grecos, Maeterlincks and Puvises. Braque appears to have been the innovator in Cubism; and obviously in Braquism—the brown brand of mandoline, man's eye and bottle; lately, through Picasso's gayer agency, taking on brighter and purer colours. Futurism once more gave this Wandering Jew from not far from the Sierras a further marching order. Off his talent leapt into little gimcrack contrivances—*natures mortes,* in fact, come out of the canvas; little pieces of *nature-morte* sculpture, nature as the artist sees her, in fact; the bottle, mandoline and copy of *La Presse* reappearing out of art transfigured, after passing first through the artist's eye, spending a bit of time in the busy workshop of his brain, and so abiding for a year or so, into the flat

world of the artist's canvas. After this series of hairbreadth adventures it is natural that this docile collection of objects should no longer remind the casual observer of any category of objects known to him.

In considering the future of painting, Picasso is the most useful figure on which to fix your attention. This is partly in his favour inasmuch as it recognises his activity; but it is the uncertain and mercurial quality of his genius, also, that makes him the symptomatic object for your study and watchfulness. Everything comes out in him perfectly defined. Every influence in his sensitive intelligence burns up and shows itself to good advantage. There is nothing, as I have said, with regard to technical achievement, that he cannot do. He appears to me to have a genius similar to Charlie Chaplin's; a gnome-like child. His clock stopped at fifteen summers (and he has seen more winters than Charles, although Charles is not averse to a Dickens scene of the Poor Orphan in the Snow), with all the shallowness of a very apt, facile, and fanciful child, and the miraculous skill you might expect in an exquisitely trained Bambino. These cases of arrested growth are very common in his race. You merely have to consider what sort of a child you have to deal with, what moves him most; whether this mercurial vitality, so adaptive as to be flesh-creeping, is preferable to a vertical source of power, like the sour and volcanic old *crétin,* Cézanne. It is which manner of life you most prize, admire really. You have your critical flight; and I am ready for the moment to suspend you, glide you, spin you, plunge you, or stand you on your head, according to your fancy.

Now, if you are not used to critical flights, and you turn to me as one accustomed to banking, looping and splitarsing, and ask me what I advise, or, to put it in another way, what is *my* fancy, I should answer as follows :—" I consider Pablo Picasso as a very serious and beautiful performer in oil-paint, Italian chalk, Antoine ink, pastel, wax, cardboard, bread—anything, in fact. But he appears to me to be definitely in the category of executants, like Paganini, or to-day, Pachmann, or Moiseivitch; where Cézanne is clearly a brother of Bach, and the Douanier was a cousin of Chardin."

That his more immediate and unwavering friends are dimly acquainted with this fact is proved by a statement I have just read, in the current (September 26) number of the *Athenæum,* by the French painter, M. André Lhote:

" Cézanne embodies, through the romanticism with which he was impregnated, the avenging voice of Greece and Raphael. He constitutes the first recall to classical order. It was necessary, in order that the lesson he gave us might be understood, that an *interpreter* should appear. This was Picasso.

" The young Spanish painter deciphered the multiple enigma,

translated the mysterious language, spelt out, word by word, the stiff phrases. Picasso illuminates in the sunshine of his imagination the thousand facets of Cézanne's rich and restrained personality."

What a performer on a pianoforte does in his concerts is to give you a selection of the works of a variety of musical composers. Now, apart from giving us very complete interpretations of Cézanne, Daumier, El Greco, Puvis, as Picasso has done, there are other ways, and far more convincing ones, in which a painter can betray the distinctively interpretative character of his gift. What do all these phases and very serious flutterings of Picasso's imply? To dash uneasily from one seemingly personal mode to another may be a diagnostic of the same highly sensitive but non-centralized talent as you would think that a playing first in the mode of El Greco and then of David probably implied. These are difficult things to decide since painters *are,* through the nature of their art, at the same time composers and executants. And you must usually get at this by consideration of, and sense for, the man's work as a whole.

What has happened in this volatile and many-phased career of Picasso's? Has he got bored with a thing the moment it was within his grasp? And he certainly has arrived on occasion at the possessive stage. If it is boredom, associated with so much power, one is compelled to wonder whether this power does not mechanically spring from a vitiated and tired source. He does not perhaps *believe* in what he has made. Is that it? And yet he is tirelessly compelled to go on achieving these images, immediately to be discarded.

But when we consider one by one, and with a detailed scrutiny, the best types of work representing his various periods, we must admit that he had certain reason in abandoning them. However good a pastiche of El Greco may be, it is not worth prolonging indefinitely this exercise. The same applies to his Daumieresque period. Splendid paintings as the Miss Stein and Monsieur Sagot undoubtedly are, they are still pure Cézanne. And although many artists, among his dilettante admirers or his lesser brethren, would give their heads to produce such pure and almost first-hand Cézannes, once you *can* do this as easily as Picasso, it can hardly seem worth while to continue to do it. Very likely, at the present moment, his Ingres or David paintings will induce the same sensations of boredom in him (I can imagine David inducing *very* dismal feeling in an interpreter), and have a similar fate. All that remain to be considered are the less easily deciphered works of his more abstract periods. I think his effort of initiation and obstinacy in this brand of work showed a different temper to the other set of things that we have been considering. But they, again, are open to question. They reduce themselves to three principal phases. The first, or Cubist, phase, really a dogmatic

and savage development of Cézanne's idiosyncrasy (example: " Dame jouant de la mandoline ") is in a way the most satisfactory. But I am not convinced that Cézanne gains anything by what is a very interesting interpretation of his vision. But, on the other hand, the Lady with the Mandolin appears to me as interesting as a typical Cézanne portrait, and it is a powerful and inventive variation on Cézanne. About the next step—fourth dimensional preoccupations and new syntheses added to the earlier ones (" Dame assise ") and the first Braque-like contrivances—you wonder if they are not more important as experiments, and important because of their daring and new nature, than as final works. But the whole character of these things: the noble structural and ascetic quality, the feeling that he must have had, and that he imparted to them, that he was doing something at last worth while, and in fitting relation to his superb painter's gift—this makes them a more serious contribution to painting than anything else done by him. All the admiration that you feel for the really great artist in Picasso finds its most substantial footing in the extraordinary series of works beginning with the paintings of the time of the Miss Stein portrait, and finishing somewhere in the beginning of his Braque period.

That, put as clearly and vividly as I am able, is my account of Picasso up to, I suppose, about 1913 or 1912. It must be remembered, however, that I have been analysing this work according to the highest standards that it is possible to apply to a painter. And in the light of the subsequent work, with which I entirely disagree, and for the purposes of combating the tendencies that must inevitably result from its influence, I have underlined those things in Picasso that would be liable to result in the mechanical eclecticism that I describe in the next section of this pamphlet (The Studio Game). It has been a critical, and, in intention, destructive analysis.

PART IV

The Studio Game

Section 1. *Foreword.*

2. *Our Æsthetes and Plank-Art.*

3. *The Bawdy Critic.*

4. *"We Fell in Love with the Beautiful Tiles in the South Kensington Museum Refreshment Room."*

5. *The Vengeance of Raphael.*

6. *General Nature and the Specialised Sense.*

Foreword to Part IV

TWO things have conspired to exalt indifference in the painter to the life around him, and the forms that life takes, to a virtue.

For a specialized visual interest in the débris of your table, or the mandolin you have just bought, in copying the colours of the roofs seen from your garret-studio, is *not* the creative interest required for art. It is a parasitic interest. Your interest in the forms around you should be one liable to transfigure and constantly renew them : to use the grand masses of life, in fact, as the painter uses the objects on his table. He does not paint those objects as though he were photographing them. He arranges, simplifies, and changes them in his picture. So it should be with the larger form-content of general and public life.

Braque and Picasso have *changed,* indeed, the form-content before them, and with which they have dealt. Witness their little Nature-morte concoctions. But it has only been the débris of their rooms. Had they devoted as much of their attention to changing our common life, in every way not only the bigger, but the more vital and vivid game, they would have been finer and more useful figures : less precious, but not less good, artists.

Two things, then, have made this indifference displayed by most artists to their form-content come to be regarded as a virtue. One is the general scepticism and discouragement which is a natural result of the conditions of our time. Intellectual exhaustion is the order of the day; and the work most likely to find acceptance with men in their present mood is that work that most vigorously and plainly announces the general bankruptcy and its own perdition. For the need of expression is, in a sense, never more acute than when people are imperturbably convinced of its futility. So the most living become the most life-like waxworks of the dead.

The painter stands in this year in Europe like an actor without a stage. Russia is a chaos; whether a good one or a bad one remains to be seen. Writing in Paris has fallen among the lowest talents. Painting is plunged into a tired orgy of colour-matching. A tessaract broods over Cézanne's apples. A fatuous and bouffonne mandolin has been brought from Spain; an illusive guitarist twangs formal airs amid the débris. Germany has been stunned and changed; for the better, pious hope says. But for the present art is not likely to revive there.

A great new vivacity seemed to spring up some ten years ago in the art of painting; and a number of the younger painters are embarked on an enterprise that involves considerable sacrifices and discomforts, an immense amount of application, and eager belief. This local effort has to contend with the scepticism of a shallow, tired and uncertain time; there is no great com-

munal or personal force in the Western World of to-day, unless some new political hegemony supply it, for art to build on and to which to relate itself.

It is of importance, therefore, to a variety of painters, who have put their lives into this adventure, that it should not be, through the mistakes, the cupidity, or the scepticism of their leaders, or one mischance or another, brought to wreck.

This part of my pamphlet deals with a track at the head of which a board advising avoidance should be placed; or, rather, against two tracks. For the Braque Nature-morte phase, and the David-Ingres phase in which painters in Paris are at present indulging is the same sort of thing, different as the results (a small abstract Nature-morte, and a large painting à la David) may appear.

Our Æsthetes and Plank-Art

THERE are two attitudes towards the material world that, one or other manifesting itself in him, an artist may very roughly be distributed on one side or the other of a creative pale. These attitudes can be approximated to the rôles of the sexes, and contain, no doubt, all the paradoxes of the great arbitrary sexual divisions of the race. An artist can Interpret or he can Create. There is for him, according to his temperament and kind, the alternative of the Receptive attitude or the Active and Changing one. One artist you see sitting ecstatic on his chair and gazing at a lily, at a portion of the wall-paper, stained and attractive, on the wall of his delightfully fortuitous room. He is enraptured by all the witty accidents that life, any life, brings to him. He sits beforé these phenomena enthralled, deliciously moved to an exquisite approval of the very happy juxtaposition of just that section of greenish wall-paper and his beautiful shabby brown trousers hanging from a nail beneath it. He notices in a gush of rapture that the white plate on the table intercepting the lower portion of the trousers cuts them in a white, determined, and well-meaning way. He purrs for some time (he is, Mr. Clive Bell will tell you, in a state of sensitive agitation of an indescribable nature), and then he paints his picture.

He gushes about everything he sees. He is enraptured at the quality of the curious clumsy country print found on the lodging-house wall; at the beauty of cheap china ornaments, a stupid chair, a staring, mean, pretentious little seaside house. When with anybody, he will titter or blink or faintly giggle when his attention is drawn to such a winning and lovely object. I am, you will perceive, drawing a picture of the English variety of art man. The most frequently used epithet will be "jolly" for the beautiful; and its pursuit will invariably be described as "fun." So we have before us, all said and done, a very playful fellow indeed, who quite enters into the spirit of this "amusing" life, and who is as true a "sportsman" as any red-coated squire; only for the pursuit of "jolly" little objects like stuffed birds, apples, or plates, areas of decayed wall-paper, and the form of game that he wishes rather smirkingly and naughtily to devour, he must be as cunning, languid, and untidy as his distinguished brother-sportsman is alert, hearty, and coloured like a letter-box. For stalking a stuffed bird you have, in the first place, to be a little bit dead yourself.

I have been portraying to the best of my ability the heir to the æsthete of the Wilde period: the sort of man who is in the direct *ligné* of Burne Jones, Morris, and Kate Greenaway. And he is a very good example of how to receive rather than to give.

Now all the colour-matching, match-box-making, dressmaking, chair-painting game, carried on in a spirit of distinguished amateurish gallantry and refinement at the Omega workshops, before

that institution became extinct, was really *precisely the same thing,* only conducted with less vigour and intelligence, as the burst of abstract nature-mortism which has marked the last phase of the Cubist, or Braquish, movement in Paris. These assemblings of bits of newspaper, cloth, paint, buttons, tin, and other débris, stuck on to a plank, are more " amusing " than were the rather jaded and amateur tastefulness of the Omega workshops. But as regards the Nature-mortists and Fitzroy tinkerers and tasters, one or other have recognised the affinity. Both equally are the opposite pole to the credence or intensity of creative art.

The Bawdy Critic

UNDER a series of promptings from Picasso, then, painting in Paris has been engineered into a certain position, that appears to me to bear far too striking a family likeness, in its spirit, to the sensibility of the English amateur to give one much hope for it. In the analysis of what I see as a deep weakness, and a scholarly, receptive and tasteful trend, rather than a creative one, I must put forward a little testimony, and devote a little space to what are otherwise thoroughly unimportant people. The important thing is obviously the painting in Paris, and not the type of English dilettante mind to which I compare it. But if I can make you see this real and striking community of temperament and intention, you will know better where you are when you find yourself in front of an arrangement of bits of newspaper, cloth, cheese parings, bird's feathers and tin. You might not otherwise come to the truth of this mystery at once. For the law that assembled these objects together will appear, and indeed is, more daring and abstruse than the more nerveless and more slovenly colour-matching and cushion-making to which I relate it. Again, it is really only what happens in a picture that is not organised to attract the objects that it depicts. Whether you stick a bit of wallpaper and a patch of trouser-leg side by side on a piece of wood, or use these objects in a picture painted on a piece of canvas, it is much the same. The only thing that can be said of these particular experiments is that they demonstrate an exasperated interest in media and the shop side of painting, and a certain mental liveliness. But as regards them, there the life stops.

A desire to accept and enjoy : to accept what is already in the world, rather than to put something new there : to be in a state of permanent pâmoison and rant about everything ; the odder the thing, the *queerer* that you should find yourself fainting and ecstatic about it, the better—the *funnier,* you see? It is in the possession of this spirit, at bottom, that I am associating these two sets of people.

A composer of music does not, in his best or most specialised moments, fling himself into a luxurious ecstacy at a musical performance. The painter, similarly, does not derive from his own paintings, or other people's, " æsthetic ecstacies " or anything nice like that. He derives from the production of his own paintings, or should, a hundred times more pleasure than any bechevelured hysterical amateur is likely to find in front of *any* work of art. As a matter of fact, in most cases it is out of *himself,* not from the picture, or the art object, that the amateur gets his satisfaction. Hence the arcanely masturbatory tone in which some of them chant in the newspapers of their experiences.

" Connoisseurs in pleasure—of whom I count myself one—know that nothing is more intensely delightful than the æsthetic thrill," etc., croons one.

Unsatisfied sex accounts for much. You wonder if it is really a picture, after all, and not a woman or something else that is wanted, for the purposes of such a luxurious thrill. Is not most emotional interest in Music or Pictures, unaccompanied by the practice of the art enjoyed, sex? In fact, the painter or the musician are the only people for whom it is *not* sex. These bawdy connoisseurs should really be kept out of the galleries. I can see a fine Renoir, some day, being mutilated: or an Augustus John being raped !

"We Fell in Love with the Beautiful Tiles in the South Kensington Museum Refreshment Room"

IF we intend thoroughly to pursue our Pablo into the deplorable corner into which his agile genius has led him, and others with him, we cannot do better than marry him, in our minds, for the moment, to the erudite form of Mr. Roger Fry. And if I devote a little space to the latter amiable gentleman, it is only to use him as a glow-worm by which we can the better examine Pablo's peculiar plight.

I will give you a passage from an article of Mr. Fry's which appeared in the *Athenæum* of July 11 of this year.

"Objects of the most despised periods, or objects saturated for the ordinary man with the most vulgar and repulsive associations, may be grist to his (the artist's) mill. And so it happened that while the man of culture and the connoisseur firmly believed that art ended with the brothers Adam, Mr. Walter Sickert was already getting hold of stuffed birds and wax flowers just for his own queer game of tones and colours. And now the collector and the art-dealer will be knocking at Mr. Sickert's door to buy the treasures at twenty times the price the artist paid for them. Perhaps there are already younger artists who are getting excited about the tiles in the refreshment room at South Kensington, and when the social legend has gathered round the names of Sir Arthur Sullivan and Connie Gilchrist, will inspire in the cultured a deep admiration for the 'æsthetic' period."

Mr. Sickert you find embedded in the midst of this useful passage. He is a living and genuine painter; and is in that galère, therefore, you can take it, fortuitously. Notice, first, the stuffed birds got hold of by Mr. Fry's artist "for his queer game of tones and colours." Mr. Fry's artist's "queer game" is the same as Picasso's ingenious sport. Then we have a luxurious picture of "the collector and the art-dealer" knocking at the artist's door, and asking to buy his "treasures" (more luxury)—the stuffed birds that have been used in his "queer game"—for *Twenty Times the Price* paid for them. Next we have a little picture of the young students of the South Kensington School eating buns and milk in the Museum Refreshment Room, and oozing infatuated nothings about the tiles they find there; and going back with naughty, defiant minds to their academic lessons, their dear little heads full of the beautiful tiles they have seen while at lunch. "WE FELL IN LOVE with the beautiful tiles in the South Kensington Refreshment Room," to parody the famous advertisement. We think of the sugary couple on the walls of the Tube, that utter their melancholy joke and lure

you to the saloons of the Hackney Furnishing Company; and we know that Mr. Fry's picture is as sentimental a one as that —the student "getting excited," the gush, the buns, and the tiles.

The last sentence of the passage I cite prophesies that "the cultured will at some future date conceive a deep admiration for the æsthetic period." After the tiles of South Kensington Museum, the faded delights of the æsthetic period! Mr. Fry chooses the æsthetic period as the subject of his prophetic vision because of a natural predilection that he no doubt feels for it, because he is a little bit in advance of his time in this respect. He already feels the thrill of such an admiration.

But you are to understand first that there is no mode of the human mind, no "period," no object of any sort or description, that will not have its turn, and be enthused about either by the art-student, or the "cultured"; and secondly that this is very much as it should be, and that this universal tasting and appreciation is all for the best; quite the most suitable way of envisaging the art of painting, sculpture and design.

It was no doubt, in the first place, a very naughty piece of fun for this scholarly and fastidious art-critic, with a name in Europe for his taste and knowledge of Italian pictures, to find himself exclaiming in rapture over some object as trivial as most of the objects he had up till then dealt in had been rare. He naturally might find this phenomenon absorbing. Theoretically he has no predilections. All flowers are the same. But an especially conscious plant on which he should chance to alight would feel from his method of settling, the character of his tâtonnements, that he had not alighted for the purpose of extracting honey at all. Such a critic, at the same time a dilletante, is not curious about the *object* that his mind approaches, but is entirely engrossed with *himself* and his own sensations. It is *amusing* to flit from petal to petal; the grace with which you alight is amusing; it is amusing that people should suppose that you are engaged in such a dulcet business as gathering honey; to bask in a slightly intoxicating pollen-thickened atmosphere is delicious; but the fun is only to *pretend* to be a bee.

The eclecticism, then, as regards modes and periods of art, finds its natural development in an eclecticism as regards objects. "A man's head is no more and no less important than a pumpkin," from the article already quoted. "Objects of the most despised periods may be grist to his (the artist's) mill." Should art connoisseurs and dilettantes all turn painters, the sort of art movement they would like to find themselves in the midst of (we are supposing them fashionably-minded, as many are) would be such a giant amateurism and carnival of the eclectic sensibility as we are in for, if the dealers' riot in Paris succeeds, and if

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the votaries of Nature-mortism and the champions of the eclectic sensibility here, are to be believed.

We see exhibitions of French painting written about in the tone of an intellectual tourist, as though they constituted an entirely new thing in the way of pornographic side-shows, to which the English tripper is immediately led on his arrival in Paris. The "æsthetic thrill" obtained at these shows is described in an eager and salacious key, and with many a chuckle. The truth is that for the amateur turned critic, or the amateur painter, these modern painter's experiments still remain imbued, as they do for the public, with a great deal of naughtiness. The especially English philandering flapper-sensibility transpires in every sentence of their accounts of shows. There we have then our indigenous æsthete splayed out for our leisurely observation.

I will now give you a few lines of an interview with Picasso, which appeared in the *Weekly Dispatch* of June 1 of this year:—

"Picasso was enchanted with our metropolis (London). He waxed excited over our colourful motor-omnibuses.

"And Picasso had a thrill of joy on discovering a pavement artist. 'This good man knelt down and drew in coloured chalks on the stone. I assure you, they are admirable.'"

The motor buses are the same as the tiles in the Refreshment Room. The pavement artist is the eternal Naif or Gifted Child. When will the Naif, the Pavement Artist and the Child resume their places, qua Child or Naif simply: the very good Naif, like the very good Child, as rare as anything else very good, alone remaining in our foregrounds?

And it is easy to see how Picasso, wonderful artist as he is, has encouraged this hope of a thoroughly detestable state of amateurish art—naughtiness, scepticism, and sham, setting in here and in Paris. Certainly, if you do not want to be turned into a tasting-machine, you will not have any truck with the studio-game into which the general movement in painting to-day has been sidetracked.

The Vengeance of Raphael

DAVID is the order of the day. David, the stiffest, the dreariest pseudo-classic, has been seized on (as a savage tribe might take one of their idols by the heels and drag him out), and has been told in frenzied and theatrical accents that he must Avenge himself! And being probably a rather peppery and bloody-minded little Frenchman, revenge himself he will, if he is not stopped! Or, rather, M. Lhote, his self-appointed executioner, will do the job for him. Picasso, alleged to be doing portraits in the manner of Ingres, is the cloaked and consenting, of course Spanish, figure in the background of this "classical" razzia. "Raphael shall be avenged!" shrieks M. Lhote. I have heard from people who have seen this artist in Paris in the last month or so that he is really very excited, and that the Madonna-like face of the Florentine master inspires him to very great fury: a fury of idolatrous love, a determination to make short work of those who have played ducks and drakes with their inheritance of Greek beauty.

The parrot-like echo of all this turmoil turns up punctually in our Press. I saw this week in a current art article the first tinkle of the eulogistic thunder that is shortly to burst, everything indicates, around the Parthenon Frieze in the British Museum. Nasir Pal's square semitic shoulders may get a pat or two in passing. But it will be in the Greek gallery where all the fun of the fair will rage. These draped idealities have already been described as *distorted,* to bring them into line!

Ingres, David, Raphael! Poussin and Claude! Easter Island carvings, El Greco, Byzantium! But there is a vast field yet to cover: the friezes from Nineveh, the heart of Sung, Koyetzu and Sotetzu, the Ajanta caves, Peru, Benin; and the Polar regions have their unhappy dolls, harpoon handles, and the Midnight Sun for some future ballet!

This is leaving out of count the tiles in the South Kensington refreshment room and the "æsthetic period," and a million other such varieties. What incredible distances the art-parasite travels!

Is Western Europe too uncertain of to-morrow, the collapse of religion too dislocating, Great Wars too untimely, for us to have an art that is any more than locally or individually constructive? I am convinced that the sooner the general European destiny of painting gets out of the hands of the dealers' ring in Paris the better for it. Also the hysterical second-rate Frenchman, with his morbid hankering after his mother-tradition, the eternal Græco-Roman, should be discouraged. And I think that Picasso could be indicted of more than a personal and excusable vacillation. And his personal limitations should be stated and understood, as Cézanne's, or any other individual man's should be, where they conflict with anything that is more living even than the individual.

General Nature and the Specialised Sense

WHEN it was necessary in this country and elsewhere to undertake a rapid education of a Public of some sort, some exaggeration had to be indulged in. If a man was persuaded of the reality of his enthusiasms, the position had to be posed *too logically* for reality, or to be exact. Also everything in the innovation that contradicted the tenets of the prevalent and tired sensibility had to be thrown into a crude saillance.

But to-day this necessity no longer exists.

Yet writers supporting, more or less, the great movement in painting going on everywhere in Europe, still repeat the lesson as it was given them. The statement, for instance, that a man's head is no more and no less important than a pumpkin indicates a considerable truth: it depends in what connection, only, that it is advanced and how applied. The ideal of the pure visual has obviously no preoccupation but formal and colour ones. But when you say that Cézanne, an heroic visual pure, in his portrait of the two men playing cards, was emotionally moved only by the form and colour, you are omitting a great sub-conscious travail of the emotion which fashioned along with the pure painter's sense; dyeing with a sombreness and rough vitality everything that he did. There is no painter's sense, admittedly, so "unbiological" that it can be independent of this extra-sensual activity of the painter's nature. His disposition, his temper, his stubbornness, or his natural gaiety are all there in his specialised sense. Given the undoubted and fundamental rightness of this sense, it is an open question how far the emotional non-specialised activity of the mind should be stimulated and how explicit its participation should be in the work of a painter.

The important thing is that the individual should be born a painter. Once he is that, it appears to me that the latitude he may consider his is almost without limit. Such powerful specialised senses as he must have are not likely to be overriden by anything. He would laugh at you if you came along with your "head and pumpkin."

To sum up: On the subject of eclecticism, if there were no painters and therefore no art, the dilettante would have nothing to be eclectic about. Secondly, no good painter has ever been eclectic or very fickle in his manner of work. And if the complexity and scepticism of his time drives an artist into the rôle of the dilettante, or interpretative performer only, that is unlucky for him. It is not in the interest of painters, but only of the stunt amateur, or the dealer, to keep silent on that point.

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